tenhan THE INDEPENDENT

Ho, ho, ho! Saddam gives Santa a visa

Santa Claus is coming to town. Baghdad, that is. Andrew Marshall hitches along on the Mother of Ali Sleigh Rides.

He has been on some tricky missions before, exploring the darker recesses of people's central heating systems, overdosing on dodgy sherry, covering the entire globe in one night aided only by a few grumpy elves. But this could be his toughest job yet. For Santa Claus is due to fly into Iraq on Christmas

The visit has been cleared with the United Nations Sanctions Committee, and with the Iraqi authorities. It has been co-ordinated by an Icelandic charity, Peace 2000. Santa will be taking gifts, food and medicine for Iraqi children hit by UN sanctions since the 1990-91 Gulf War.

Thor Magnusson of Peace 2000, which is organising the trip, says that Santa is a non-political figure who can bring a message of peace and goodwill to Muslims and Christians alike. "We are also appealing for a peaceful solution in the Middle East, hoping that leaders will get together to stop the suffering of children," he said.

It is uncertain how this message will go down in Baghdad. Peace and goodwill have not exactly been seasonal favourites in Iraq under Saddam Hussein. Nor is he normally that comfortable with cheery bearded fellows. They look a little, well. Iranian, which is why most of Saddam's close colleagues choose a moustache only.

Despite Mr Magnusson's firm faith in Santa, he is apparently unhappy to rely on the traditional sleigh and reindeer. Instead, Peace 2000 has chartered a Russian cargo aircraft. The group said it still had to ensure that the plane would be in Reykjavik on time for Santa's planned takeoff on Wednesday.

We think everything will work out, we're sorting out the final details," said Mr Magnusson. He told Reuters the Icelandic embassy in New York had said that a UN sanctions committee had approved the flight, despite severe restrictions on civilian aircraft over Iraq. Baghdad had also given approval.

There is also a no-fly zone over southern and northern lraq, policed by US fighters, which forbids all fixed-wing aircraft. It is unclear, according to the United Nations, whether this also covers reindeer-powered craft.

There was no word from Peace 2000 as to what, if anything, they had chosen to put into Saddam's stocking. (Teletubbies electric cattle prod? Spice Girl gas mask?) Saddam will, presumably, be spending the festive season with his family - or what is left of it; his close relatives have tended to come to unhappy ends.

Twas the night before Christmas, and all through Baghdad, The parents were sombre, the children were sad. Festive spirit was missing. Alas and alack, Santa Claus wasn't coming to visit Iraq. For to north and to south was a tight no-fly zone, So no Santa Claus for one nation alone. But a kindly Icelander called Thor Magnusson, Decided Iraq deserved some festive fun-He called up Saddam, and the Sanctions Committee. And for once everyone showed some heart and some pity. They let him go in with some food and some toys To bring some good cheer to the girls and the boys. So Santa was cleared for his Middle East flight, And he called to his reindecr outside in the night: "Come Donner, come Blitzen, come Clinton and Bush! Come Thatcher and Major!" And then, with a rush, He took to the skies, in his special Stealth Sleigh, And with full fighter escort, he went on his way.

TODAY'S NEWS

MoD cries poverty over

exemption from having to pay the minimum wage to its

defence ministers are arguing that they cannot afford to

A health guide on how to keep your cool is the best-

selling book this Christmas. The Little Book of Calm, by

past week and is likely to end up as the top seller of

Paul Wilson, an Australian advertising executive.

asures 3in by 4in and contains fewer than

1.000 words, yet it has sold 33,000 copies in the

rises for low-paid staff

The Ministry of Defence is demanding a blanket

staff. Despite spending £16bn on 232 Eurofighters.

upgrade the pay of 300 low-paid workers. Page 4

Calming influence

the year. Page 6

- Andrew Marshall

Streetlife: Pavement dwellers trying to keep warm in New Delhi yesterday. Bitter cold in northern India has killed 20 people, six in the city IRA prisoners will leave Britain next month

Seven IRA prisoners held in British jails are to be moved to the Irish Republic in a move which will please Sinn Fein but may increase Unionist disillusionment with the peace process. Our Ireland correspondent says the development follows yesterday's release on Christmas leave of Patrick Magee, serving life for the **Brighton** bombing

It is understood the transfer of the seven republicans has been approved and will take place in the new year. It is the latest in a series of transfers to both Northern Ireland and the Republic. It is believed that all those wishing to transfer to Northern Ireland will by then have had their requests

granted. Even before the news of the latest transfers became known, lovalist representatives were warning of "severe alienation" among the Protestant population which they said could threaten both the talks process and the loyalist ceasefire. Meetings between the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Mo Mowlam, and two key loyalist parties appeared to have had little immediate effect in soothing ruffled feathers and allaying their concerns.

Rather, a loyalist prisoner being released from the Maze on Christmas parole announced that Ulster Defence Association (UDA) inmates were reviewing their support for the "faltering" peace process. Billy Adams, complained of "appeasement and constant concessions to Sinn Fein / IRA".

He added: "We have witnessed government concessions to republicans on all fronts, be it a reduction in security levels or the erosion of our political and cultural identity. Where is the parity of esteem for loyalist prisoners."



Photograph: Brian Little his 10 days' Christmas leave

BY DAVID McKITTRICK

160 prisoners, including loyalists, republicans and others. were released over Christmas for 10 days, a longer period than usual. Among those released jailed for life for the Brighton bomb attack which in 1984 killed five people at the Conservative Party conference and which narrowly missed assassinating Margaret Thatcher. He is among those who have already been transferred from England to Northern Ireland.

Republicans are by no means delighted with the pace of movement on the prison issue. They are pressing for the early release of all paramilitary prisoners, describing this as a confidence-building measure needed to underpin the IRA ceasefire. They have also criticised Dublin for assuring Lon-

He was speaking as around don that transferred prisoners will continue to face their full sentences.

Loyalists are aggrieved, however, that in terms of prison concessions they regard republicans was Patrick Magee, who was as being well ahead. Both sides are benefiting from the Christmas parole while both also qualify for the increased remission which was announced in 1995. But republicans have also benefited from early releases from prisons in the Irish Republic, as well as transfers of IRA prisoners from prisons in Britain to Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic.

There are no loyalist paramilitants held in prison in the Republic; if there were, Dublin would almost certainly agree to their speedy release. Similarly, there are no loyalists left in British jails who qualify for transfer to Northern Ireland. retrieve this situation."

This means that only republicans are benefiting from the recent relaxation in prison policy.

While loyalists do not necessarily disapprove of the transfers and releases in the Republic, they feel their prisoners are missing out. The feeling of alienation is compounded by events in the political arena such as the recent meeting in Downing Street between Tony Blair and the Sinn Fein president, Gerry Adams. Such developments are regarded as clear advances for republicans and therefore as unhelpful to the general loyalist cause.

The authorities will most immediately be concerned that the loyalist unrest might result in an outbreak of violence which could cost lives. Already this year loyalist violence has resulted in 11 deaths, compared to three killings by the IRA, and there is an ever-present danger that a rise in tension might produce a resort to the gun by either mainstream loyalist paramilitants or breakaway elements.

The other question is whether the Ulster Democratic party and the Progressive Unionists, the two political groupings which represent the main paramilitary groups, will attend the multi-party talks when they resume at Stormont on 12 January.

Ms Mowlam said yesterday that she was concerned at the announcement that UDA prisoners would review their attitude to their ceasefire. In a Christmas message, however, she declared: "I am confident that an agreement can be reached against a background of peace on both sides." The UDP leader, Gary

McMichael, who met Ms Mowlam yesterday, said afterwards: "There is a growing feeling within Unionism and loyalism that the Government is valuing the concerns of nationalism above those of loyalism and Unionism. There is a need for rapid movement on Mo Mowlam's part to try and



TELEVISION The Eye, page 12 CROSSWORDS Page 28 and The Eye, page 9 WEATHER The Eye, page 10

Photograph: AP/Saurabh Das



IN FRANCE, A BOTTLE OF CHAMPAGNE

IS OPENED

ánard-Duchène





CANARD-DUCHÈNE. CHAMPAGNE SANS FORMALITÉ.

Kids check out Santa

Children may soon be able to send a "gift list" to Santa by using a laser gun on the bar codes of toys. The Toys R. Us chain has already adopted the idea at its 6,000 conjugers in America and executives say it is likely to be increduced in Britain soon. Page 6

S COLUMN ONE

Happy left gnome alone as garden thieves strike

It would be a sick and twisted mind that could ever accuse Happy of feeling Grumpy but this Christmas the fairytale dwarf could be forgiven for at least feeling miserable.

The 12-inch high gnome has been abandoned by Snow White and the other dwarves in a compelling disappearance act that has left police baffled and a Cheshire family grief-stricken.

Statuettes of Snow White, Grumpy, Sleepy, Dopey, Sneezy, Doc and Bashful went missing from the front garden of the Connor family home in Macclesfield last week. Wrecking the family's plans for a happy Christmas, the runaways then sent a card which read: "Missing you all at home, from Snow White and her six friends."

The problem for the Connors is that the card made no mention of whether the disappearance was voluntary - there is a shortage of panto characters in Cheshire this year - or whether they were kidnapped.

"At this stage, we just don't know, but I am hoping they will come home in time for Christmas," said David Connor, 44. "If you're reading this Snow White and the boys - please come home soon. We've re-named Happy, Lonely.

Helen Connor, 40, bought the gnomes 12 years ago for her daughter,



Feeling blue: Happy has been deserted by his gnome family

Sharon. Yesterday, Mrs Connor was taking the disappearance personally. "Obviously they thought they could get a better Christmas dinner somewhere else." she said. "At least Happy has stuck by me.

Cheshire constabulary said they were concerned that the dwarves might have been taken against their will. The arrival of the card almost caused a major incident room to be set up. "We thought it was a ransom note at first." said spokeswoman Brenda Cowling. "We're ho-ho-hoping they come back under their own steam.*

The disappearance - and the police's willingness to join in the fun surrounding it - demonstrates an apparent lack of more serious crime over the holiday period. Many forces are reporting a quieter time than usual. "Our crime press phone line is so empty that we've had to fill it with

Christmas carols," said Ms Cowling. "At the moment, we're running - well. it had to be - Blue. Blue Christmas. If past form is anything to go by, the Connors can expect to receive

many more cards from the missing gnomes. During the 1980s, there was a spate of gnome disappearances which were usually followed by postcards sent from around the world as the thieves visited various holiday destinations and wrote back as the missing gnomes. On one occasion, however, the episode had a happy ending when the

prodigal gnome returned, his face painted a tanned brown and a little suitcase, resplendent in stickers from around the world, stuck to his tiny little

	TOURIST RATES			
	Australia (dollars) Austria (schillings) Belgium (francs) Canada (\$) Cyprus (pounds) Denmark (kroner) France (francs) Germany (marks) Greece (drachmei) Hong Kong (\$)	2.45 20.20 59.33 2.32 0.84 11.02 9.61 2.88 456.63 12.48	Italy (lira) Japan (yen) Malta (lira) Netherlands (guilders Norway (kroner) Portugal (escudos) Spain (pesetas) Sweden (kroner) Switzerland (francs) Turkey (lira)	2,832 214.38 0.62) 3.23 II.84 291.30 242.88 12.65 2.33 326,048
İ	Ireland (punts)	1.11	USA (\$)	1.62
				Source: Thomas Cook
,			Ranes for m	dication purposes only

CONTENTS News Comment Home news **Obituaries** Christmas '97 World news Peace on earth? Despatches Crossword 24. The Eye, 21 The Eye, 22 Theatre Weather TV & Radio The Eye, 23-24 Style Features Leader, letters



NEWSPAPERS SUPPORT RECYCLING Recycled paper made up 41.4% of the raw material for UK newspapers in the first half of 1997.

HA .HA .. HA .. HA MAN

I SEE.

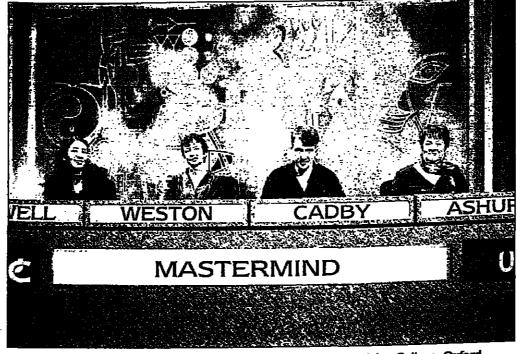
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PEOPLE



Brains trust: The Mastermind team on their way to defeat by Magdalen College, Oxford

Youth overcomes experience in quiz challenge

The University Challenge champions scored a victory for youth last night when they defeated a team of Mastermind finalists, proving that the decline in educational standards is greatly exaggerated.

In a closely fought contest Magdalen College, Oxford, reigning champions of University Challenge, beat the Masterminders by 260 points to 205.

The four students have a combined age of around 90, compared with over 170 for their four Mastermind opponents.

Their triumph over experience follows claims that today's students are not as bright as their predecessors. This suggestion was highlighted by the recent recordbreaking defeat of New Hall College, Cambridge whose team achieved an all-time low score on University Challenge of 35 points.

It prompted suggestions that students in the Sixties and SevenSTARTER FOR TEN

I: What is the name for the white mesocarp which lines the exocarp or rind of many citrus fruits?

2: Born in 1893, which American dancer and choreographer created the first modern dance technique to provide a significant alternative to classical ballet, which was intended to "reveal the inner

Q: Which cathedral is unique among medieval English cathedrals in being planned as a single unit m the early English gothic style?

It Pith, 2 Martha Graham, A Salescene ties who battled for honours in the

original series hosted by Bamber Gascoigne had broader and deeper general knowledge.

But in last night's showdown.

Magdalen's students, all from state secondary schools, stormed ahead to prove they were just as brainy as 1960s students.

Jim Adams, a maths and philosophy student, Colin Andress reading philosophy and ancient history, Gwyllim Thear reading English and Alison Reeves, a history student, trumped their opponents on questions from choreography to cathedrals.

The show's producer Peter Gwyn said: "By putting [Magdalen against a formidable team of Mastermind finalists, I think we've demonstrated that the student population is as bright and as well-informed as ever."

The Mastermind team included the winner of the last ever series. Anne Ashurst, and finalists Clare Ockwell. Andrea Weston and Colin Cadby, the team's captain. The programme ended in September after 25 years.

Mandelson calls time on Dome stage spectacular

The theatrical impresario Sir Cameron Mackintosh had a dream. The Minister without Portfolio Peter Mandelson killed it.

Sir Cameron, the producer of Cats and Miss Saigon, had been drafted in by Mr Mandelson to the team organising the Dome exhibition for the millennium. Now Sir Cameron has admitted that his grand project has been dropped because it would have proved too expensive.

entire budget and would have involved 1,000 chilwould have entered into enclosed 1,000-seater segments, and in a great coup de théâtre the walls would

The cost of construction had been estimated to a technical display." be around £250m.

Sir Cameron said: "It has proved prohibitive. I am sorry it is not going to happen. But it is one of those chicken and egg situations. You have to do the show before you can cost it.

"But I am delightfully free of an extraordinary responsibility which was giving me sleepless nights. Now I can retire to my croft in Scotland for Hogmanay

The show would have been called About Time with a touch of Back To The Future. It had its roots and would have cost almost a third of the Dome's in Britain's great past and looked to the future. Children were at the heart of it. Its underlying philosodren. It was intended to seat 12,000 people, spectators phy was along these lines - what you learn from the past is what the new generation has to use to take responsibility for the future. It was going to have an have risen to reveal the auditorium in its entirety. emotional heart to it. We did not want it to be just

- David Lister

Disney's magic man earns £1 m pay increase

The Magic Kingdom has again waved its wand on Michael Eisner, the chairman of the Walt Disney

The genius overseeing Mickey Mouse, Goofy and Donald Duck has been given a £1m pay rise. This follows recent news that he cashed in a tranche of eight-year-old Disney stock options worth more than £300m - a landmark in American corporate history.

Mr Eisner, 55, sees his annual salary boosted to £5.6m, which is his handsome reward for guiding the firm through a very successful

During the past 12 months. Disney stock has risen from £42 to £60. The once-troubled company has had its best year. The films division has produced hits such as Hercules and there have been similar success stories in cable television and theme parks.

Under the autocratic control of Mr Eisner. Disney has become an entertainment giant over the past



ten years. He has been described as "Disney's biggest asset next to Mickey Mouse

Disney lured Mr Eisner away from Paramount in 1984 when Disney was in deep trouble after a string of had films and had debts. He took a modest salary in Hollywood because of the all-important share options.

Taking the job on a perfor-

mance-related basis paid off and since joining his earnings total

In April 1994 Mr Eisner assumed complete management control of Walt Disney after Frank Wells, who had run the entertainment group with him for almost a decade, was killed in a helicopter crash. Three months later Mr Einser had a quadruple heart bypass operation.

In November of this year, Mr Eisner was threatened with a lawsuit which would have laid bare studio accounts. Jeffrey Katzenberg, a workaholic and founder of the new Dreamworks studio, filed the lawsuit against Disney, his old employer. He claimed he was owed vast sums for producing the \$700m hit, The Lion King.

The dispute turned personal when Mr Eisner refused to promore him despite 10 years of loyal and lucrative service. The feud ended in a secret deal.

— Alexandra Williams

TRAVEL UPDATE

Road rage alert as Britons make dash for Christmas

For those who spend Christmas at home, it will be dark, wet and windy. Little wonder that record numbers of people - an estimated 650,000 and the to flee to warmer climes this year.

People driving to see relatives will find the worst traffic jams today, according to the AA, which suggested that people defer their journeys until tomorrow morning. The Highways Agency is to remove major roadworks. over the holiday period, but routes to the airports, such as the Mar Heathrow, are expected to be particularly congested.

The RAC, meanwhile, has identified a new hazard: Festive Airro Feb. sion. In-car rows are more likely than ever at this time of year, it wanted, with tempers frayed as a result of over-indulgence in food and too much time spent with relatives. In such circumstances, poor map reading can

The airports will handle huge volumes of passengers over the coming days. Heathrow's busiest day so far was last Friday, when 180,000 passengers passed through the airport. Some 140,000 passed through the airport yesterday, and another 115,000 will join them today.

Gatwick, Britain's busiest holiday airport, will handle 900,000 passengers over the Christmas and New Year fortnight, a 30 per cent increase on the same period last year. One of its busiest days will be next Saturday, when 88,000 people are due through its departure and arrival lounges. A 24-hour strike by customs officers at Gatwick, due to begin at 11pm



that the strike, over new work rotas, would cause minimal disruption. The Association of British Travel Agents said yesterday that the highnumber of people leaving the country for Christmas could be a result of the building society windfalls earlier this year.

Some 400,000 have booked package holidays, with Spain, the Canary Islands and the Algarve the most popular destinations. The most favoured. long-haul spots are Florida and the Caribbean, while skiers are travelling. mainly to France, Austria and Italy.

On Christmas Day, only two rail services will be running - the Gatwick Express from London Victoria, and the Eurostar train to Paris and Brussels. The Gatwick Express will also run on Boxing Day, together with Connex South Eastern services and those on the LTS (London Tilbury and Southend) line. Normal rail services will resume on Saturday, but Railtrack said some cancellations were possible because of maintenance work.

The ferry company Stena will operate three round trips on the Dover to Calais route on Christmas Day. It is carrying 350,000 passengers and 75,000 cars on its ferries to Ireland and continental Europe over the hol-

Bank staff plan strike over festive opening

Customers at four high street banks could find services disrupted today as staff walk out in disputes over pay and working hours.

Thousands of members of the Banking Insurance and Finance Union at Midland are to stage a 24-hour strike in protest at the bank's insistence on opening this afternoon. In the past the bank has closed early to allow employees to prepare for Christmas.

At Royal Bank of Scotland branches in England and Wales, where employees are stopping work at 1pm, management is demanding that Christmas Eve be regarded as a normal working day from 2000. The bank is offering compensatory time off of one day this year and half a day next year, but none thereafter.

Staff at the Yorkshire and Clydesdale banks are taking action today over salaries. Both banks have imposed performance-related pay rises which the union claims will give many staff increases below the inflation rate and others nothing at all.

Ed Sweeney, general secretary of the union, said of the disputes over working hours: "Christmas Eve afternoon is a traditional holiday for bank staff and we don't accept that it could ever be a normal working day." On the issue of pay, Keith Brookes, the union's assistant secretary, said banks were making record profits and could well afford "decent" pay rates.

"It's no surprise that staff are fighting back," he said. Richard Pulleyn, employee relations manager at Yorkshire Bank, said the stoppage would have a minimal impact on customer service. He estimated that nine out of 10 branches would be unaffected. The bank said

its offer was worth an average rise of 4 per cent. At Midland a spokesman argued that only one in 10 staff favoured taking. industrial action and he expected virtually all branches to be open as

- Barrie Clement, Labour Editor

THE INDEPENDENT

In common with other national newspapers, The Independent will not be published tomorrow, Christmas Day. But we shall be back on Boxing Day with a special edition which includes our top writers reviewing the moments that made the year, a complete guide to the sales and a sports quiz.

7.30 FOR 8

AND SO THE DUCK

SAYS 'TAKE YOUR

HANDS OFF

MY WALLET

CALL ME

AND POUT

SOME MOMENT'S LATER.

AND SO

THE DUCK

5415

TAKE YOUR

HANDS GFF MY WALLET

AND DON'T CALL ME

by Chris Priestley



ZITS







by Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman

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IN BOXING DAY'S INDEPENDENT



Moments that made the year: our star writers on the top stories of 1997



sports quiz of the year; and our complete guide to the sales

Computer game firms accused of inciting attacks on gays

Virgin Interactive's European marketing director, Louie Beatty, recently said: 'We never brief any agency to go away and be controversial. That would be sad.' Well, if urging people to scream 'Southern poofs' or 'Northern gits' at innocent passers-by isn't controversial, what is, asks Clare Gamer.

A billboard campaign which invites onlookers to shout "Southem poofs" as an invitation to get beaten up is being investigated by the Advertising Standard Authority following complaints that it is homophobic.

£500,000 nationwide advertising gimmick to sell a new computer game in the week before Christmas. A strapline on the top of all 400 posters reads: "New 3D Street Fighter EX. joke, see the fun." For the next closest thing, stand here and shout ..." Beneath, the words "Southern poofs" or "Northern gits" are written, depending on whether the billboard site is south or north of Birmingham.

Last night Virgin Interactive, which is marketing the game, intechnology. The terms "Southern poofs" and "Northern gits" were being used "as tongue in abuse." cheek, as common parlance," according to a spokeswoman for the company.

"It's not meant to offend," she said. "It's not meant to be



The adverts in Birmingham (top) and Hove, East Sussex Photographs: Mike Scott/News Team (top) and Andrew Hasson

The posters are part of a think we are marketing in a way that is slightly different to our competitors. We try to grant people a bit of intelligence, value. That they can see the

But some members of the gay community have not seen the funny side. Tim Teeman, editor of The Pink Paper, the national newspaper for lesbians and gay men, has had calls this week from readers upset by the advertisement. "Irony or no irony, the meaning is lost on sisted that the campaign was a them. It's presented so aggresjoke, designed to give the pub- sively. It doesn't sound like a use of the word 'noof'. but an aggressive use which is company to encourage gay men a familiar term of anti-gay

The ASA is investigating the advertisement for possibly causing "serious or widespread offence." The watchdog's code states: "Particular care should we're about at all ... We like to fence on the grounds of race, re- ucts."

ligion, sexual orientation or

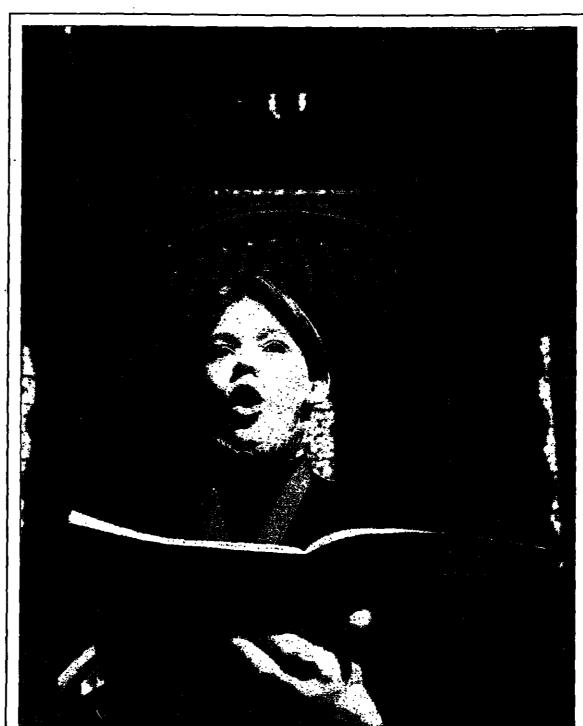
A spokesman said: "In this investigation, we will bear in mind that "poof" has several meanings to different people, and even within the gay community itself."

Other current Virgin Interactive campaigns include one for the Bladerunner computer game which has a tagline: "I wanna get this guy out of my hair. Fingernails ... carpet ...' above a picture of an artificial human in the game. Another advertisement runs: "It takes guts to do what I do. Theirs." For the horror game Resident Evil, the line runs: "Contains bits of the original."

A spokesman for Sony, which makes Sony PlayStation. the machine on which the Street Fighter game is played, said yesterday that the "Southern poofs" campaign had been damaging to them. Although Sony has nothing to do with the manufacturing or marketing of that they won't take it at face Street Fighter games, it has taken some of the flak for the ad.

> Liam Hilley wrote to Sony complaining about the poster outside his bedroom window. The term "Southern poofs" is, he wrote, "an incitement to hatred and condones queer bashing." His partner had bought a new PlayStation and a number of games for Christmas, but after he saw the campaign they were duly returned to the shop.

"I would have thought it betto purchase your products," he went on. "As gay men without family ties my partner and I have a disposable income in excess of £3,000 per month. I am not the only one to feel like this. My family and friends have deaggressive. That's not what be taken to avoid causing of-cided to boycott your prod-



Noteworthy: Edward Burrowes, 12, head chorister at St Paul's in London. This will be his last Christmas at the cathedral, with a carol concert today at 4pm and midnight mass at 11.30pm

Spam, spam, spam, spam... er, no more spam

Spam, Spam Spam, Spam, lovely Spam and ... er, no more Spam. The favourite Monty Python meal is under threat. Yesterday the last factory in Britain producing the much-loved and much-laughed at luncheon meat has closed.

The Newforge factory in Liverpool has shut with the loss of 140 jobs after 40 years of producing Spam under licence for a US company, the Hormel Food Corporation. The Spam for all of Europe will now be produced in Denmark instead.

Spam, which took its name from its ingredients of shoulder pork and ham, first entered the national consciousness as a convenience food 60 years ago.

It became known as the soldier's food during the Second World War and formed almost a daily part of servicemen's rations because it was convenient, easy to digest and contained protein. But for civilians also, it was often the only meat available in wartime Britain and was indispensable until rationing ended in 1954.

But it was the Monty Python team that immortalised Spam in British minds. In one classic sketch John Cleese, Michael Palin et al dressed as Vikings to sing the Spam Song (Lyrics: "Spam, Spam, Spam, Spam, lovely Spam, wonderful Spam").

"I don't think we ever got permission from the company. We just went ahead," said Michael Palin. "In the end the Spam people were very keen and promised to send us several tins of free Spam. We said: 'No, that's all right. Thanks anyway ..."

The managing director of Newforge, Malcolm Johnson, said he was bitterly disappointed at losing the licence after investing £1.5m in new machinery at the factory over the last 18 months.

Mr Johnson said: "The staff have been magnificent. They have worked hard right up to the last day, hoping something would with Hormel but they would not budge."

In recent years, the factory churned out 12 million of the 60p cans a year with an annual turnover of approximately £8m.

Mr Johnson said he believed that with Spam having made 70 per cent of Newforge's produce, the company would now bave to wind down.

Glenda Cooper, Consumer Affairs Correspondent

Apromise isa promise is a promise.

We will save you money on your phone bill. If we don't, we'll give you back double the difference,

Yes, it really is this simple: we promise that if you don't make savings on your call bill compared with BT's basic rate (even against their PremierLine and Friends & Family schemes but excluding temporary promotions), we'll give you back double the difference.* Yes, that's double the difference. So to see how much you could save, why don't you ring us now on FreeCall 6500 500 366 quoting RINDPR.



Price Pledge rerms apply on Cable & Wireless SmartCall, UK-Call and LocalCall bills only. For non-cable customers the Price Pledge comparison is on call charges only; for cable customers it is call charges and line rental incusion subject to status. Not available for Calling Card and non-geographic calls including mobiles. For quality of service purposes we may occasionally monitor or record your telephone calls with Cable & Wireless.

Harassed junior doctors explain why life is no fairytale

The long hours being worked by junior doctors are making them grumpy, sleepy and dopey. Now they are waiting to see whether Alan Milburn, the health minister, will respond to their plight like Snow White or the Wicked Witch. By Jeremy Laurance, health editor.

of them feels like singing Hi-Ho, Hi-Ho. The British Medical the NHS's hardest workers to why they lack a song in their

Dr Paul Flynn is dopey. He gets a couple of hours' rest a night if he's lucky, between helping new babies into the world at the Royal Victoria In-

gets half pay (not the time and a half, as is customary in other Association introduced seven of trades) when she's doing overtime at Milton Keynes Generthe press yesterday to explain al Hospital. Dr Judith Kerr is sneezy but dare not take time off because there is no one to cover for her.

The weary junior doctors are hoping Alan Milburn will play Snow White and see that hospitals honour the terms of the firmary in Newcastle. Dr Liz New Deal on their hours of

working week of 72 hours for most doctors - of which no more than 56 hours should be spent working, with the remainder on call - but the deadline for its implementation passed a year ago and there are still 5,600 juniors working more than they should, according to

Yesterday Dr Mark Porter. nior doctors committee, wrote tential threat to patient safety."

It's off to work they go but none Soilleux is grumpy because she work. That imposed a maximum to Mr Milburn to protest about the lack of progress on improving juniors working conditions. He said research had shown that working non-stop for 17 hours had the same effect on doctors' ability as a blood-alcohol level of 70 milligrams per 100 millilitres of blood, "The cffect of a tired junior doctor is similar to that of a person driving after a Christmas party. We chairman of the association's ju- are concerned about the po-

Dr Porter said that emergency patients admitted in the small hours were at less risk from overtired doctors than routine cases, "When you are doing routine tasks out of hours on top of the emergencies, that is what makes you tired and grumpy and you can miss little things, he said.

Six junior doctors had agreed to go public on the poor conditions under which they are still made to work. However,

main anonymous after signs that earlier protests by him had affected his job prospects.

"I was struck that in two separate job interviews I was asked about my problems with working long hours. It was generally implied that I was a bit of troublemaker," he said. Dr Porter said many junior doctors working over Christmas would be denied even rudimentary comforts. In his letter of work.

one - Bashful - preferred to re- to Mr Milburn, he said: "Many sub-standard living conditions and face a night or bank holiday on call without a good hot Bye-bye

le-mail

virtual

Hi Christmas Eve. you was

This has grave implications for morale and is particularly depressing for those on call over the Christmas period."

He added that a new effort was needed from NHS Trusts to implement the limits on hours

Young man's cell death sparks big jail suicide inquiry

has become the 69th person to commit suicide while in jail this year. The record death tolis, says Jason Bennetto, Crime Correspondent, has prompted the launch of a special inquiry in the New Year.

Ian Kerr, 18, was supposed to be in the hospital wing of Feltham Young Offenders Institution in west London, receiving treatment for an injury

looked into his cell on Monday afternoon they found him hanging by his belt from a bunk bed.

Despite attempt to resuscitate him he was pronounced dead 55 minutes later. Facing charges burglary, actual bodily harm and possession of drugs, the youth, from Romford, Essex, had been remanded into custody and was due to spend Christmas behind bars.

His death brings the total number of suicides to a record total of 69 in jails in England and Wales, with a week left to go in 1997.

This year 16 male young offenders, 52 adult inmates, including two women, and one 18-vear-old woman killed them-The toll has been rising from 41 overall rate is declining."

Next year Sir David Ramsbotham. HM Chief Inspector of existing probation system, it Prisons is to carry out a special inquiry into suicides in jail.

In September Sir David severely criticised Feltham Young Offenders Institution for inmates aged under 21, describing it as "bursting at the seams"

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A teenager awaiting trial with a "disturbing" number of 15- and 16-year-olds being locked up. He said it had become a "gigantic transit camp" which was "grossly overcrowd-

ed" with more than 900 inmates. The increasing numbers and shortage of resources made it incapable of tackling re-offending. A suicide last year was the first in four years at the jail. Four people took their lives in 1991-

An internal prison investigation has been set up into the death of Ian Kerr and a coroner's inquest will also be held.

The pressure group Inquest has been campaigning for years for the removal of vulnerable But when prison officers and young offenders from prison environment and to introduce new anti-suicide measures in prisons.

A spokeswoman said: "How many more deaths do we need before the authorities take some positive action?

A spokesman for the Prison Service said Richard Tilt, the Director General, had asked Sir David to set up the inquiry. He added: "It must be rememhered that the suicide rate is rising among the general public, and particularly among young males aged 16 to 35.

"Prison suicides have to be viewed in this context, as there are a large number of this age group in custody. We also have a record prison population - if selves while in the prison system. you take that into account the

gional "correctional services" are to be set up to replace the was said vesterday.

A Probation and Prisons Review will conclude that the regional centres are the best way of combining the work of the existing 54 probation services with the jail network.

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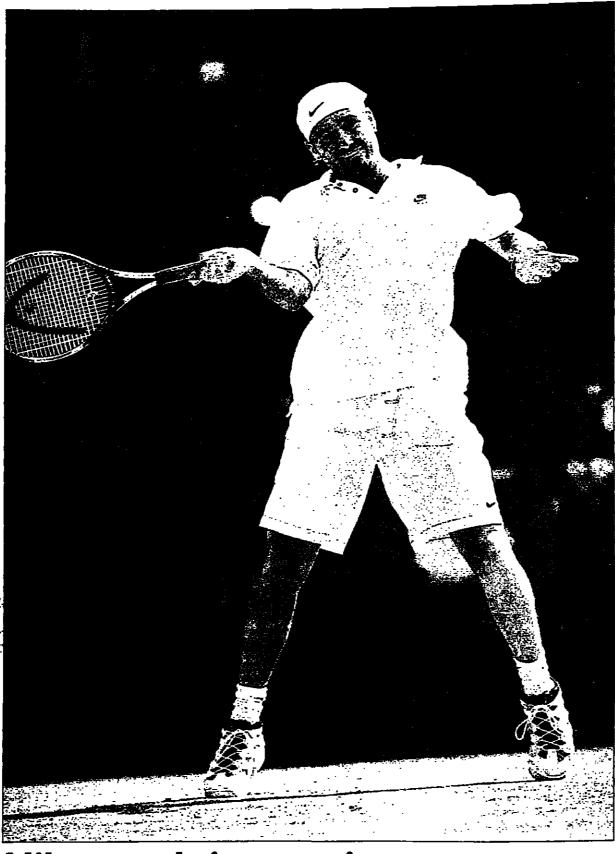
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Nike treads into environment row

The leading sports wear manufacturer Nike has been forced to redesign its Air trainers after discovering they are a threat to the environment.

The shoes, as worn by stars such as Andre Agassi (above), use a gas which fills the cushioned heels and soles, giving them buoyancy. The gas is far more damaging to the atmos-

Embarrassed Nike executives, who pride themselves on being environmentally responsible, have promised to phase out the use of the substance sulphur hexafluoride, or

SF6, within three years. Twothirds of the shoes sold by Nike use the gas. The range, led by Air Max, went on sale in 1978.

The company uses 288 tonnes of SF6 a year, a gas It's excellent that they are which stays in the atmosphere for 3,200 years, 30 years longer

than carbon dioxide. The switch from SF6 to nitrogen has been welcomed by environmentalists. Tarjei Haaland, a spokesman for Greenpeace, said: "It's a strong and very persistent gas and mak-

phasing it out but why not 100 per cent by next year?"

Graham Anderson, a Nike spokesman, said that while world leaders had given themselves 15 years to cut in greenhouse gases, Nike had decided on a total phase out by 2001. - Alexandra Williams

Defence ministers want minimum wage exemption

Defence ministers have demanded a blanket exemption from the minimum wage for the armed forces. The minister in charge of the minimum wage, lan McCartney, is trying to block the move. Fran Abrams, Political Correspondent, reports on the latest attempt to water down the reform.

The minimum wage would cost the Ministry of Defence about £3m per year, the Liberal Democrats have calculated. That is just a tiny proportion of the department's £21.8bn annual budget.

But despite plans to spend The Ministry of Defence can afford to spend £16bn on 232 new Eurofighter warplanes, but is arguing that it cannot afford to upgrade the pay of all its em-

The trade and industry minback. He is believed to be determined not to give in to the demands. Although no other government departments are known to have asked for exemptions, the move could create a dangerous precedent. The NHS, for example, will be hit

port in the Independent on Sunday that he had threatened to resign on the eve of his draft Bill's publication because of pressure to water it down. He is believed to have been angered by Peter Mandelson's sudden announcement at the Labour Party conference that young people under 26 could be exempted - something that is now in the draft Bill.

The level of the minimum wage is to be set by a Low Pay Commission, which is due to report next year. Trades unions have argued for £4 per hour. though there have been suggestions the final figure may be

nearer to £3.50. An investigation for the NHS Confederation by Pay and Workforce Research has shown that 37,000 hospital staff would have their pay upgraded if the minimum wage was set at £3.70

The Oxen

per hour. If it was set at £4.15 per hour, 104,000 people would be affected. However, a spokeswoman for the confederation. which represents NHS employers, said yesterday she did not believe it had requested a similar exemption.

The second most vulnerable department would be John Prescott's Department of Transport, Environment and the Regions, which would probably have to pay about £1m extra per year in wages to 1,200 staff paid under £4 per hour. That department, too, is expected to be prepared to pay the extra.

However, spokesmen for both the Ministry of Defence and Department of Trade, and Industry confirmed yesterday. that a request for an armed forces exemption was being

A DTI official said the draft Bill published at the end of last month had left the possibility of some limited exemptions for the armed forces open. "The Minimum Wage Bill is enabling legislation, and will give the Secretary of State the power to set ister, Ian McCartney, is fighting a rate. There is opportunity for variations, though what those variations will be is under discussion," he said.

A Ministry of Defence spokeswoman pointed out that the bill was "just a draft". "This is the time for the department to have a look at the Bill and if there is something that could be Earlier this month Mr Mc- damaging of course that will be

David Chidgey, the Liberal Democrats' spokesman, has calculated the cost of the move from Parliamentary answers. John Spellar, the defence minister, told him 3,402 were MoD civilian staff were paid less than £4 an hour. Paying that rate would cost £3m a year

"I can understand why the MoD are gibbing at this," he said. "This is the cost on basic time alone. With overtime, God only knows how much it will

There was confusion last night over whether the Ministry was seeking an exemption for civilian staff. A DTI spokeswoman said she did not believe it would. Although Mr Chidgey supported a minimum wage he said it should have flexibility built into it, particularly in terms of regional variations.

laser-gun or the ide

THE MEY SOON be MEET TO all list' to Father Names by using a land. eccies of toys, if, as their alrom the US is adopted. Examines the

enomenon of kids licensed Magand what it will comment

THE carried out Personal Horons Tacker Brides Tally freely date Cooks of tops

- 产生心中神事 with the bear

Churchgoer

Paulin Amonda. Estimate from

By Thomas Harry

DAILY POEM

Christmas Evc. and twelve of the clock. "Now they are all on their knees." An elder said as we sat in a flock By the embers in hearthside ease.

We pictured the meek mild creatures where They dwelt in their strawy pen, Nor did it occur to one of us there To doubt they were kneeling then.

So fair a fancy few would weave In these years! Yet, I feel, lf someone said on Christmas Eve, "Come; see the oxen kneel

"In the lonely barton by yonder coomb Our childhood used to know," should go with him in the gloom, Hoping it might he so.

This week's poems come from The Faber Book of Christmas, Simon Rae's wide-ranging anthology of poetry and prose on all aspects of the season; sacred and secular, pro and con, at home and abroad (Faber & Faber, £9.99).

Social worker link to abuse

A social worker has been suspended following allegations made

during a major police inquiry into child abuse. South Wales police investigating allegations of child abuse at 33 children's homes passed information to Cambridgeshire County Council which suspended the 48-year old man.

A council spokesman said: "Police indicated he was involved in an inquiry relating to an alleged serious offence said to have been committed in the 1970s and the decision was taken to suspend him." The man works as a front line social worker and is be-

lieved to have been employed in Cardiff 20 years ago. South Wales Police have received more than 250 individual allegations of sexual and physical abuse made by former residents of homes.

new Swatch Telephone?

Carey warning over cuts The Archbishop of Canterbury yesterday said he understood

the need to shake-up the welfare state but cautioned Tony Blair against making cuts which hit the needy. Dr George Carey said he appreciated the logic behind the

Government's wide-ranging review of benefits spending, but cautioned that the Government had to strike a delicate balance between modernising the system and protecting the most vulnerable in society.

Girl's Turkish lover marries

Musa Komeagae, the Turkish ex-waiter who married an underage British girl. Sarah Cook, last year, has married a Turkish woman in a Muslim ceremony. Anatolian news agency said. Religious marriages are popular in rural Turkey but not

Irvine warns on reform of Lords

The Lord Chancellor yesterday appeared to back the idea of an elected second chamber in the Government's plans to reform the House of Lords.

Lord Irvine, who will chair the Cabinet committee handling the reform, said he did not want a reformed chamber to become the "biggest quango in the nation's history".

Speaking on the Radio 4 programme Today. Lord Irvine said the Constitutional Reform Programme (HL) committee. which meets for the first time in January, would consider all the options: a fully nominated, a wholly-elected chamber, or a mixture of the two,

But asked about a fullynominated chamber, he said: "I think that it would be very important to avoid the perception of the biggest quango in our nation's history.

"It would be very, very important to ensure, if the nominated option prevailed, that it was perceived not as a big quango but as a house of all the talents of the nation and fairly

appointed in a way - if you went down that route - which would unquestionably involve a significant declension from the Prime Minister's powers and indeed from the powers of the political parties."

The Government has indicated that a Bill to abolish hereditary peers' voting rights will be introduced in November next year. The Torics leader in the

Lords, Viscount Cranborne, approved the Lord Chancellor's remarks, adding:: "What I find depressing is the idea of a huge additional accretion to the Prime Minister's power of patronage." His fear was that the Government would embark upon two-stage reform but only carry out stage one - the abolition of hereditary peers' rights -without moving on to how best to replace them. "It's far too interesting for a Prime Minister to have a huge increase in his patronage and ... never proceed to stage two." he said.

 Michael Streeter, Legal Affairs Correspondent

The state of Section of race Eiteann the land state bread.

Bye-bye Teletubbies: children's letters tell Santa they'd rather have crayons

TOP 10 FOR BOYS

Teletubbies Action Man Bicycles Playstation Cyber pets Star Wars figures Football kit Buzz Lightyean

Father Christmas can rest assured if he is having problems getting hold of Teletubbies children would rather have pens, pencils and crayons, according to his elves at the Post

A survey of children's wish lists sent to Santa Claus through the post found the traditional writing implements beat the

Laa-Laa proved the most 750,000 letters sent to Father popular figure with both boys

and girls. The Spice Girls, who one song spot from the Teletubbies this week, came in at number five among girls. Tamagotchi cyber pets, bi-

cycles and Sony Playstations also

Christmas care of Reindeerland. The longest list received was

from a nine-year-old boy in snatched the Christmas number Kent who asked for 1,453 individual presents. A Reindeerland spokesman

said an eight-year-old boy's request for £5m in unmarked banknotes had been turned

woman's wish for a man would be treated sympathetically.

In return for their presents, letter writers promised to put out more than 500,000 carrots and more than a million mince pies to keep Father Christmas John Roberts said the letters to and the reindeer going through the night.

Some 2,500 dummies and 67

with letters explaining their them. Forty-nine letters contained applications for jobs in

Reindeerland. Post Office chief executive Santa were among a record. 2.225 billion letter and cards sent through the post this

Teletubbies into second place. cropped up frequently in the down, but a 91-year-old babies bottles were sent along Christmas. The biggest post bag came on Tuesday 16 Deowners had grown "too big" for cember, when 135 million items were handled - an all-time record for a single day and double the normal daily total of 72

> More than 100 million customers were served at Post Office Counters in the month leading up to Christmas.

TOP 10 FOR GIRLS **Teletubbies** Cyber pers Barbie dolls Spice Girl dolls Bicycles Secret daries Baby New Born Playstation

Net surfers send e-mail cards and virtual snowballs

It's Christmas Eve, you've got a hangover and have forgotten to send cards or presents. Fear not! Help is at hand. Genda Cooper, Consumer Affairs Correspondent, looks at the joys of a virtual Christmas.

Internet traffic increases by one-fifth in the weeks running up to Christmas, according to the service provider Direct Connections. The reason they give is simple: people panare turning to the Net to e-mail their greet-

If you are the sort of person who begins Christmas shopping late on Christmas Eve. a growing number of web sites are can view them at the web site. springing up to ensure that you can keep Mum. Dad and Grandma happy without having to move from your computer.

The first stop is of course the virtual posting date. Ben Elman, managing director tive ritual of Mersinet, one of the providers which offers people the chance to send virtual cards free, says that he has seen increased interest in the concept.

ing snowbunnies and traditional Christmas scenes. They can then add a personal greeting of their own. The way it works is that an e-mail is sent to the recipient informing them to go to an Internet site where the "card" can be picked up.

"Some people like to send Christmas cards to wish others happy Christmas," said Mr Elman. "They can go the day before you don't have to be supremely organised. We're not like post offices - we never go to sleep. 24 hours a day, 365 days a year."

parketing assistant, says that because she has three sisters - one who lives in Hong year." Kong, one who lives in San Francisco and al communications to make sure everything up from your chair to throw a snowball then

She said: "I'm not very organised over things like posting dates and birthdays, so virtual cards are really useful for me. When one of my brothers-in-law got a new job I managed to buy him a virtual pint over the Internet. I also like sending virtual flowers. It's a good way of keeping in touch if you're living far apart and especially if you're living in a different time zone."

So if you somehow missed the shops, then there's always virtual presents (www.virtualpresents.com) or virtual flowers (www.virtualflowers.com). Virtual flowers could be seen as a particularly good way icking that they have missed posting dates of calming down a romantic partner who was hoping to receive the real thing. Again, the recipient receives an e-mail from the virtual bouquets robot telling them that their partner has sent them flowers and they

But Dr Roy Bailey, psychologist and clinical director of the New Row Clinic, Buckingham, said that the growth of virtual Christmas was more than just disorgani-Christmas card, for all those who forgot last sation but was the beginning of a new fes-

"It is a reinvention of Christmas, to help make sense of it today," he said. "Virtual Christmas allows us to refresh the Christmas we know ... Paradoxically, it's bring-Mersinet's site ing Christmas closer. Computers are often (www.mersinet.co.uk/xmas) can choose a seen as depersonalising but things like this design from more than 20 offered includ- actually make it more personal as the internet is used for expressing sentiments. I think it's actually quite iconoclastic."

Ben Knox, marketing director of Direct Communications said: "Over the past three years we have noticed an increase in Internet traffic of about 20 per cent in the two weeks leading up to Christmas. Although we have no way of knowing, my guess is that this is due to people realising they have missed the posting dates for Christmas and so are sending e-mail Christmas cards, children e-mailing Santa and Claire Marston, 27, a communications people sending junk mail, like the e-mail snowballs which seemed to be in vogue last

Ah ves. Now this is a site for the truly one in Grimsby - she now relies on virtu- lazy. If you can't even be bothered to get you can access www.snowpark.ch/snowball.



Postman Brian Farr takes a breather from his busy schedule deer this little town is not found in Israel, but a hamlet nestled in the Welsh hills near Llandeilo.

And business has been brisk in the festive season for the village

postmaster Gwilym Richards. For rather than making the 2,200-mile their Christmas cards franked in Bethlehem have travelled from as far afield as Southampton and the Scottish borders to the Ca-

marthenshire hamlet. Not wanting

to miss out on the opportunity, some tourists dropped their Christ-

For the past month Mr Richards, 61, has been furiously stamping more than 100 cards a day. "My right elbow is very tired. One day last week I had 35 cars parked in a

row outside the Post Office," he said. Destinations have included and Canada. One of the most usual cards he sent was in Latin, addressed to the President of China.

— Alexandra Williams Photograph: Philip Rees

for the ideal wish list

Children may soon be able to send a 'gift list' to Father Christmas by using a laser gun on bar codes of toys, if, as likely, an idea from the US is adopted. Kim Sengupta examines the phenomenon of kids licensed to shop, and what it will mean for parents.

Just writing to Santa may no longer be enough. Juvenile shoppers could soon be presenting a comprehensive list of demands for Christmas backed up by the statistical data of the bar code.

The Toys 'R' Us chain has already successfully adopted the idea in its 600 outlets in America, Executives say it is likely to be introduced in this country in the near

Market testing was first carried out in the US last year, and operated throughout the chain this year. Children, guided by adults, are allowed to range freely through stores zapping the bar codes of toys they want. The information is picked up by the shop's computer, and the manager then presents accompanying adults with the list for bought at once, or the printout can be kept to give friends and relations to use at any branch which is convenient to them.

A spokesman for Toys 'R' Us in Britain, owned by the American company, said: "We know the project has been a success in the read over the holidays. US, and any development there is closely monitored over here. So obviously there is every possibility the concept may be used over here."

The marketing benefits for the chain are far reaching. In a fiercely competitive to stress-free living. business, the company is building up a valuable databank which can be used for normal trading, and other occasions such as birthdays as well as Christmas.

However, in Britain the bar code system, say some toy retailers, can alleviate milk" for its relaxing powers. queues, as well as phenomena such as "toy toys such as the Teletubbies and Spice Girl failure of parenting duties by some parents and has led to rows and threats of violence

But even in the US there has been a grandparent and child. Over the years the culture of children and adults' memories of their own childhood has grown further their approval. Items on the list can be and further apart". He adds that the electronic register further alienates parents and children as they take away the need for dis- American writer and former Independent cussion between parents and children.

Laser-gun shopping aims Guide to stress-free lifestyle tops readers' book list

A health guide on how to keep your cool is the nation's favourite book this Christmas. David Lister looks at what people are buying to

Stress levels must be high this year. The most popular book this Christmas is The Little Book Of Calm, Paul Wilson's guide

Wilson is an Australian advertising executive, and his book measuring 3in by 4in contains fewer than 1,000 words of advice. It ranges from breathing tips for bad sleepers to advising the "rediscovery of

The book has sold nearly 33,000 copies rage" caused by the demand for popular in the past week, making it one of the most popular Christmas presents and also one dolls. Failure to get these can be seen as a of the cheapest, retailing at £1.99. Over the year it has sold 230,000 copies in high-street bookshops and is almost certain to be the best-selling book of the year.

The nearest challenger in the premixed reaction to the children's version of Christmas sales was Bridget Jones's Diary: a wedding list. Gary Cross, a historian at . A Novel, by Helen Fielding. The love and Penn State university, said: "There was a career traumas of a thirtysomething sintime when a toy mattered in terms of the gleton, which first appeared in The Inderelationship between parent and child or pendent, sold just under 29,000 copies over the week

The popularity of travel writing with a twist of humour is underlined by the next three entries, Michael Palin's journey in the Pacific and two books by Bill Bryson, The journalist's book on Britain, Notes From a



Michael Palin: his travel adventures have come full circle for a top 10 place

Small Island, which is number four this year, of a Northern Ireland childhood and the there was no doubt that Paul Wilson is the topped the pre-Christmas charts a year ago.

Fiction doesn't seem to be too high on are the other biographies in the list. most people's gift lists. Terry Pratchett, Louis De Bernieres and Helen Fielding were among the best sellers; but these were the only three fiction entries in the top 10. The death of the Princess of Wales and Andrew Morton's updated biography assured

him of a top 10 place. Frank McCourt's popular reminiscence cle, but when all the figures were counted over the equivalent week last year."

I Little Book of Calm, Paul Wilson 2 Bridget Jones's Diary, Helen Fielding 3 Full Circle: A Pacific Journey with Michael Palin, Michael Palin

THE TOP SELLERS

4 Notes from a Small Island. Bill Bryson 5 Walk in the Woods, Bill Bryson

6 Dickie Bird: My Autobiography, 7 Diana: Her True Story - In Her Own Words, Andrew Morton

8 Captain Corelli's Mandolin, Louis de Bernieres

Hogfather, Terry Pratchett 10 Angela's Ashes: A Memoir of Childhood, Frank McCourt !! Nation's Favourite Poems

autobiography of cricket umpire Dickie Bird

The survey of book sales was carried out

Richard Knight, managing director of

Whitaker Book Track, said: "There were

strong last-minute challenges from Bridget

Jones's Diary and Michael Palin's Full Cir-

by Whitaker Book Track, which monitors

sales in 2,000 high street bookshops.



Bill Bryson: two books among this year's leading sellers

nation's favourite author this Christmas. "The record charts may have the glamour of show business, but plenty of people who never buy a record will be giving or receiving a book this Christmas. High-street bookshops sold some 3.5 million copies of 108,000 different titles in the week ending Saturday 20 December, representing sales of £30.8m - almost a 20 per cent increase

Churchgoers angry at Irish-only invitation to Christmas Eve midnight mass

Irish television's plans to broada church in Kilburn, northwest for the capital's Irish community have led to complaints from churchgoers of other na- and their families back home. tionalities that they are being excluded on grounds of race.

organised specifically to help bring together Irish emigrants

South African-born Veronica Conroy, who has attended Radio Telefis Eireann the church's midnight mass an-

She claimed the church was insistent until it learnt she was married to a man from Cork. at which point the priest changed his mind. "I was very upset, but

broadcast the live mass tonight that she was told by the parish my husband is Irish, but not in though. My father was a deacon cast a Christmas Eve mass from from the Sacred Heart Church priest that she could not have my own right. Yet my husband in Kilburn, said the event was a ticket this year because it was doesn't even go to church." she said, "It was bizarre. A she wanted because her aunt

was Irish. It's ridiculous.". Ironically Mrs Conroy's hus-

too. The whole thing is totally out of order," she said.

The Sacred Heart Church Greek neighbour was told she said it hoped to accommodate could have as many [tickets] as all worshippers by holding five other Christmas masses alongside the Irish one. But Mrs Conroy said that was not a (RTE) the Irish state broad-mually for 30 years, and had her I was even more upset that I band was once a priest. "The substitute, "If it's at 7pm it's not custing company which is to son haptised there, complained could have had a ticket because parish priest doesn't know that midnight mass, is it?"

problem was simply huge de- he said. mand and having to give priority for tickets. "If you had ering point for Irish emigrants 10,000 tickets you'd get rid of since the Fifties, when it feathem all. Many non-Irish peo- tured in classic images by the

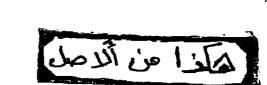
mass is going out live on RTE.

The parish priest, Father that Irish people in London are churchgoers, the vast majority Dennis Cormican, said the given the opportunity to come,"

The church has been a gathple feel it's an honour that this late Waterford-born photograchurch has been chosen. The pher Paddy Fahey.

At one stage in the Fifties Kil-The expectation naturally is burn had 14,000 Catholic

Irish. "In the years since the Second World War in Camden Town it was common to see the sign up in landlords' windows "No Irish. No Blacks." Since then the community has grown immensely in stature. You can go across all the professions and they're there." Fr Cormican said. — Alan Murdoch, Dublin



Attorneys for the man known as Carlos the Jackal yesterday asked a jury to acquit him of murder charges, saying evidence was manipulated and witness testimony not credible.

In a plea for the man once considered the world's most wanted terrorist, Olivier Maudret also told the jury that Ilich Ramirez Sanchez, the given name of Carlos, would not go free even if acquitted. Since Ramirez, 48, is also being investigated for four terrorist attacks, he would not be released. His defence team was making final arguments in his trial for the 1975 shooting of investigators Raymond Dous and Jean Donatini and Michel Moukharbal, a Lebanese Ramirez suspected of being an informer.

Francois Honnorat, another attorney, said the prosecution based its case on evidence fabricated by agents. He opened the last day of Ramirez's trial by accusing prosecutors and judges of "marching" the defendant through proceedings while presenting only "the appearance of proof."

Mr Honnorat accused the authorities of manipulating witnesses and falsifying fingerprint evidence. The lawyers also criticised the testimony of witnesses questioned at the time of the shootings: none had a clear view of the person who fired or of the weapon.

The defence has sought throughout the trial the presence of three witnesses to the shootings, in a Latin Quarter apartment rented by a friend of Ramirez. The prosecution says it could not find the people. Latin American students studying in Paris at the time. Instead, the court has heard 22-year-old depositions.

Ramirez was captured in Sudan in 1994 and taken to Paris by French agents. He is accused of carrying out the 1975 seizure of Opec ministers and was involved in the 1976 Palestinian hijacking of a jetliner to Entebbe which ended with an Israeli raid. He was convicted in entia of the killings in 1992. but once captured French law required a retrial. AP, Paris



Gift-wrapped: A boy leaves his presents on the table while listening to a priest during a lesson on Cathoilicism in the Belarus capital of Minsk

Photograph: EPA

Mother on trial as girl dies weighing 50st

A year ago last November, a 13-year-old Californian girl, Christina Corrigan, was found dead at her home, covered in sores and surrounded by filth.

This week, her mother, Marlene, is standing trial for child abuse. Mary Dejevsky reports on a case being described by some as a West Coast version of the Louise Woodward

rounded by empty fast-food containers, on the sitting-room floor of her home north of San Francisco. But she was no emaciated waif: she weighed almost 700lb (50st) and the postmortem examination found that she had died from heart failure, due to obesity. She had not attended school for a year and spent her last days watching television, and eating.

Ms Corrigan, 48, a single parent with a full-time job, says that she did her best to look af-

Since 1991, the girl refused

Christina died, naked and sur- to see a doctor, and kept ask- centre on the Corrigans' living ing for food. Ms Corrigan was unable to lift or even move her daughter. Providing food was the line of least resistance. She says that she did not neglect Christina.

Lawyers for both sides in the case stress that the charge of child abuse does not relate to Christina's weight, but to the conditions in which she lived. The prosecution also claims that Ms Corrigan should have known about the sores and called a doctor. The defence

conditions - Ms Corrigan's housekeeping, as her lawyer put it scornfully - but ever since details of the case came to light last year, it was Christina's gross obesity that shocked. The case also prompted awkward questions about the treatment of the increasing number

of overweight people in America, and the rights and obligations of parents in relation to their children. While there was widespread

follow-up.

against the obese and restric-

tions on personal freedom.

public horror that any child death, some asked why the lo-The legal arguments may cal authority and doctors did see a doctor or go to school? prison.

nothing about a child who was And could the situation supply a precedent for prosecuting four times overweight for her parents with fat children? age from the age of three and Counsel for Ms Corrigan visited a nutritionist more than had requested that the case 31) times. There was initial care, but no continuing treat-

should be tried by a judge alone, on the grounds that ment, and from 1991, when pictures of Christina would Christina became too embarrassed to go to a doctor, no arouse such strong emotions as to cloud jurors' judgement. "People aren't used to see-The case has prompted an outcry, too, from those concerned about discrimination

ing a 5ft 3in, 680lb little girl." said Ms Corrigan's lawyer, Michael Cardoza. This request was rejected, however, and a jury will decide Ms Corrigan's Was anti-fat prejudice reter her daughter, but things got says Christina told her nothing should have caten herself to sponsible for making Christi- guilt or innocence. If convicted, she faces up to six years in na was too embarrassed to

Mexican rebels murder Indians ...

Helpin

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rays of stopping offices, or dealing

Paramilitaries in the Chiapas, state of Mexico killed up to 43 Indians in a bloody attack on men, women and children, officials and local leaders said. Some reports said there were also 30 people injured. The reports said the Indians were celebrating Mass on Monday when the assault began. Many people sought refuge in schools and a Catholic church.

"This is an unjustifiable massacre, someone has to do something." said Patricia Marina, of the Fray Bartolome de las Casas Center for Human Rights.

Witnesses said paramilitaries attacked the Indians in Acteal in the mountainous municipality of Chenalho, 44 miles (70km) north-east of San Cristobal de las Casas.

Chiapas state prosecutor Marco Antonio Bezares said on national radio that the events were tragic. "It is believed we are talking about a number above 40," he said. Manuel Perez Vazquez, a local indigenous leader, said there were 43 dead and many injured after the paramilitaries opened fire. And Domingo Perez Pacencia, president of the municipal council of Chenalho, said: "This is the worst massacre that has occurred in Chiapas since the uprising of 1994.

Some reports said the victims were supporters of Chiapas's Zapatista rebels, who burst onto the national stage on 1 January 1994 with a violent uprising against the Mexican government in which officially 140 people died.

Waves of paramilitary-violence have swept the state since then as gunmen accused of being backed by landowners and local politicians have sought to punish villagers for their support of the Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN). Many Indians have fled their villages for the northern Chiapas highlands. Some reports said Monday's victims had already fled paramilitaries elsewhere in the region.

Hospitals as far away as San Cristobal de las Casas were overwhelmed as doctors struggled to cope with the flood of injured.

Man held in scam over fake Marcos gold certificates

Police have uncovered an at- tralia, said: "It's alleged that tempted £5bn fraud against a a number of people apbank in London involving gold supposedly hoarded by Ferdinand Marcos, the former Philippines dictator.

A 47-year-old Australian is accused of trying to trade fake gold certificates giving him access to tons of bullion in a Swiss bank.

been named, was arrested on Monday in Melbourne after an operation involving the City of London and Australian police. Earlier this month a group of Australians is said to have approached Rothschild bank and asked for \$7bg credit.

As collateral it is said to have been offered certificates showing ownership of the bullion, said to be worth \$9bn. The bank contacted police, who alerted investigators in Melbourne.

The two forces carried out a joint operation to track down the man and recover the certificates. The man, from the Melbourne suburb of Albert Park, has been charged with possessing false documents and was bailed on Monday to appear in court in February.

Inspector Jeff Calderbank. heading the inquiry in Aus-

proached the bank in London to trade gold certificates for a line of credit to the value of

The gold was allegedly worth \$9bn, but they were asking for only a percentage as a line of credit. "They were holding forged gold certifi-The man, who has not cates. It is alleged that the gold bullion ... was supposed to be held in a Swiss bank (and) was bullion from the coffers of Ferdinand Mar-

> Under the state of Victoria's Crimes Act, the man can be tried in Australia and does not need to be extradited to London. In 1986 Marcos and his wife, Imelda, fled the Philippines when a popular movement ended his rule. They flew to Hawaii, where Ferdinand died in 1989.

> He is reported to have stashed billions of dollars in gold in Swiss vaults during his rule. But, despite searches, the Philippines has failed to prove the gold exists.

Mrs Marcos says her husband legitimately built up a fortune by trading in gold, but the certificates were stolen when they fled the Philip-

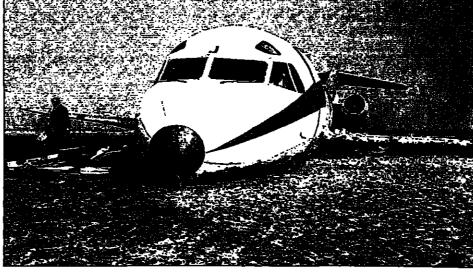
Jet crashes in Bangladeshi paddy field and all 89 on board survive

A Bangladeshi airliner crashlanded in a paddy field in fog and all 89 passengers and crew escaped; 18 were Britons. "The plane has been badly damaged. It's a miracle the passengers and crew survived," Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir, State Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism, said. "Those injured are also not in serious condition."

A survivor, Abdul Jalil, said after emerging from the Biman Bangladesh Airlines Fokker 28: "I thought I was dying but later found myself alive. It's a miracle." Others said only a miracle saved them when the plane came down two miles from the runway near the northeastern town of Sylhet on Monday night. More than 55 people, including the pilot, Captain Mannan, were injured. Mr Khan said the Fokker 28 was procured by Biman in 1981 and was in

"proper flying condition". Hundreds of villagers, paramilitary soldiers and troops joined rescue efforts. "Floods of people started pouring in as soon as the sun came up, a po-

lice officer said. An official at Sylhet airport said the plane, with 85 passengers and four crew on a domestic flight from Dhaka to Sylhet, made several attempts to land in poor visibility.



Lucky landing: Most of those taken to hospital had only minor injuries Photograph; AFP

"It's sheer luck that the plane did not burst into flames. That's why the passengers were saved from almost certain deaths," the official, who declined to be named, said. A passenger, Tara Miah, said: "It was about midnight and cold. The visibility was low due to heavy fog as we were preparing to land ... but all on a sudden

there was a jerk. -We knew something had gone wrong. Many started screaming and calling for Allah's help. "Soon we saw we had landed on a paddy field in the dark." Babul Hossain, another survivor, said the plane "bumped wildly before hitting the land. It looked like we entered an air vacuum zone".

A reporter, Iqbal Siddiqui, who visited the crash site, described the plane as "ducking into a rice field with one of its plane looked like a lame duck."

Captain Mannan told a re-

porter in hospital that he used the emergency exit in the cockpit after the aircraft had "roughly hit the ground. The aircraft appeared to have been strongly pushed by stormy wind soon after I had issued the announcement for landing. And it went beyond my control." Mohammad Habibur Rahman, a reporter who visited nearby wings broken and two of its hospitals, said there were a few wheels dug into the mud. The people with fractures but most of the others had lesser injuries.

Yeltsin back at sanitarium after day at the office

President Boris Yeltsin left a sanitarium yesterday where he has been recovering from a bad cold and went back to work at the Kremlin. After sending New Year's greetings to foreign leaders, signing several decrees and issuing recommendations to parliament, Mr Yeltsin then returned to the Barvikha sanitarium west of Moscow, and is expected to stay there for another day or two while continuing to visit his office.

Doctors recommended that Mr Yeltsin stay at the sanitarium until the end of this week to regain strength. But Mr Yeltsin has been impatient to leave after being admitted on 10 December for treatment for a respiratory viral infection.

Greeks expel Turk diplomat

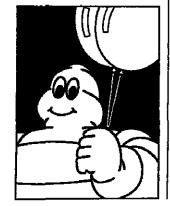
Greece expelled a Turkish diplomat from the northern city of Salonika yesterday in a spy row that has further strained relations between the traditional rivals. "Greece has decided to expel Nedim Ozergin, staff of the Turkish consulate in Salonika," a spokesman said, "He must leave Greece within the next few days." Greece had vowed to expel a Turkish diplomat on Monday, shortly after Turkey asked Athens to withdraw a diplomat at the Greek consulate in Istanbul.

Mediation with Luxor killers

An exiled Egyptian Islamist said he tried unsuccessfully to mediate between the Cairo government and armed Islamic groups after the Luxor massacre. Yasser el-Serri said he was revealing his aborted mediation attempt now because "hawks" in Cairo were carrying out a crackdown on Islamists.

Prayer for peace process

Yasser Arafat's Christian-born wife Suba lit up the Christmas tree in Bethlehem's Manger Square yesterday, opening the seasonal festivities in the town. She said she would pray for the future of her people's ailing peace process with Israel.



Sympathetic judge gives Germany's most costly fraudster a present for Christmas

property tycoon who perpetrated the costliest fraud tory, was sentenced vesterday to six years and nine months in jail. However, this being the season of goodwill, the judge

with his family.

Until the collapse of his debts of DM5bn (£1.7bn), Schneider was feted as the developer with a Midas touch. Derelict urban landscapes turned at the wave promptly lifted the arrest of his wand into luxury his wife Claudia abroad.

Jurgen Schneider, the vict to spend Christmas peak of his career, he controlled prime sites in Frankfurt and Leipzig, and in post-war German his- empire in April 1994 with lived in a gilded Schloss in the German financial cap-

ital's stock-broker belt. As creditors caught scent of the scale of his fraud. Schneider fled with

Miami in May 1995 and his holdings in order to obbrought back to Germany in February 1996.

During his trial in Frankrested on allegations that the creditors bankrolling him had known they were being hondwinked. He did not dispute charges that he

tain loans.

Heinrich Gehrke, the judge sentencing him yes. furt. Schneider's defence terday, felt sympathetic to Schneider's position, "The hanks knocked his doors down with almost unbelievable recklessness," he said. "They didn't check aswarrant, allowing the con-shopping areades. At the They were tracked down in had overstated the value of set valuations, and if there

were shortcomings in his loan applications, they simply accepted them."

Reuters, Dhaka

Among the creditors were Germany's biggest financial institutes, including Deutsche Bank, which loss DM470m.

'Schneider was neither a professional fraudster nor will be up for parole. a Robin Hood of the prop-

erty world," said the judge. Once Christmas is out of the way. Schneider will take up residence in a lowsecurity prison. Having

served 32 months already. he will shortly be entitled to home leaves at weekends. After 20 months, he

imre Karacs, Bonn



Schneider: Debts of £1.7bn

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Helping the military to beat swords into ploughshares

Peace on Earth, goodwill to all men: but how do you make it happen? As the Cold War becomes a memory, diplomats, soldiers and academics are trying to find new ways of stopping conflicts, or dealing with them when they break out. Christopher Bellamy învestigates.

Reace remains as elusive as ever. The risk of major armed conflict between states may have reduced, though it has certainly not gone away as the recent confrontation between the United Nations, United States and Iraq has shown. And conflict within states and between groups operating unchecked across state borders is increasingly evident.

. iThe UN Charter was designed for a world where the only actors were nation-states. Despite the confident predictions of a New World Order in 1991, the UN has often found itself inept, if not powerless.

. . . But a new approach to security is slowly emerging. Since the end of the Cold War academics and other experts have increasingly called for a more holistic approach to security, taking account of wider human, demographic and environmental factors which lead to discontent and conflict, as well as the traditional areas of military defence, arms control and disarmament. In the long term, this could mean diverting traditional defence resources to other areas to

create a secure environment. E. Since the end of the Cold Soviet Union six years ago, the security - and what to do about creasingly been involved in humanitarian aid, development and disaster relief, and in what are now often called "complex emergencies", although there is no formal definition of the latter. The linkages between all and the second second second



these areas became increasingly apparent.

A new definition of security, embracing conflict prevention and resolution, development War, and the break-up of the and disaster relief as well as traditional defence, was discussed need to widen the definition of at a conference in Prague on "Security in the Third Millenit-has been widely discussed. nium". The conference, which ni-Military forces have in- explored the interaction between the three Ds - defence, disaster and development - was sponsored by Nato, by the Czech Institute for International Affairs and Britain's Cranfield University.

The relationship between

defence and development is particularly complex. It is not always a simple see-saw, where resources invested in defence are denied to development.

Since the end of the Cold War the only part of the world where military spending has increased is the Asian Pacific Rim - where the advance of the "tiger economies" (until recently, anyway) combined with new and long-standing tensions has enabled those countries to spend more on arms. The role of the US as the arsenal of democracy in the Second World War created an industrial mo-soldier costs about four times as creasingly the responsibility of

century of post-war economic dominance. But in the Soviet Union and in Africa, money squandered on arms brought economic collapse and chronic instability, respectively.

The military has taken an active role in many of the complex emergencies since 1991, sometimes moving into areas such as cult for the UN to know with post-conflict reconstruction where it is not the most efficient way of doing business. This has sources, local security was ingiven rise to frequent accusations that the military is simply looking for a role. After all, a larger security issues were in-

mentum which sustained half a much as an aid worker. A key problem of recent years has been the emergence of new political structures which did not relate to nation states, including international corporations and "sub-state" or "non-state" actors - warlords and cartels. In dealing with complex emergencies, it was therefore diffi-

> whom to negotiate. In areas rich in natural recreasingly the responsibility of commercial security firms, while

multinational organisations. Many of the "complex emergencies" such as Somalia and Bosnia, resulted from the implosion or collapse of nation states, and the emergence of many such groups. The UN has, so far, tried to resolve such emergencies by refocusing the power of the state - using a mixture of military power and emergency aid. However, this may not always be the best way and mil-

itary forces may be seen as imposing an unwanted authority. The UN has no definition of "complex emergencies" - but then there is no definition of

"peace-keeping" in its Charter. A "complex emergency" could start with a natural disaster, or with reckless and destructive exploitation of natural resources. as happened in Bougainville in Papua New Guinea leading to deprivation, exploitation, abuses of human rights and conflict.

New views about security could mean some far-reaching return to violence. changes over the coming years. There have already been demands to radically alter Nato's mean that previously hidden "Strategic Concept", last re- connections become apparent. written in 1992, which has changed little since the Cold

Scott carrying a dolls' house for one of the 50 children from the Tuzla area who attended a Christmas party at the Eagle Base near Tuzia

Seasonal cheer: Lt Douglas

Photograph: Rick Bowmer/AP

FIVE CAUSES OF WAR

There are five main causes of complex emergencies: Economic - there is a strong correlation between poverty and instability, although even relatively welloff countries like the former Yugoslavia are not immune.

Societal - the inclusion or exclusion of social groups, and their access, or otherwise, to power. Cultural - notably religion, but also ethnic and linguis-

Environmental - access to raw materials, water and arable land.

Ideological - revolutionary and political movements. though these usually overlap with the other factors.

regard as anachronistic. Oliver Cromwell, reporting to Parliament in 1654, reminded it that "though peace be made, it is interest that keeps peace" This has been the approach used in Northern Ireland and Bosnia: pour in resources and investment, and give the people something to lose if there is a

Recognition of the D3 concept of development should **●** The writer is Reader in Military and Security Studies at Crun-War and which many observers field University.

A year of massacres, coups and resolution of long-running conflicts

JANUARY

sel Turk diplomat

with Luxor killers

Middle East: Off-duty Israeli k at sanitarium soldier opens fire in Hebron. wounding five people; Israeli t the office warplanes bomb suspected Hezbollah strongholds in southern Lebanon; Israel and the Palestinians sign a pact on pull-1. 12.0 15.5 out from Hebron and parts of the West Bank.

> ... Russia: Moscow completes troop withdrawal from Chechnya. Sri Lanka: Separatist Tamii rebels launch major attacks on two northern military camps in Sri Lanka, killing 60.

... Algeria: a car bombing and anarmed attack on a village outside Algiers kill at least 66 people: attackers slit the throats of 45 people in villages south of Algiers; gunman kills the leader of Algeria's largest labour union.

FEBRUARY

Sri Lanka: Tamil rebels attack two government military bases, killing at least 48 people. Albania: Parliament declares a state of emergency.

Middle East: Jordanian soldier opens fire, killing seven 1srach school girls on a field trip to the Jordan River.

MARCH

Zaire: Rebels take control of Risangani, the third largest city. · Albania: US Marines evacuate hundreds of foreigners trapped by the insurgency. A boat carrying Albanians seeking refuge in Italy strikes an Italian

navy ship and sinks. Middle East: Israeli bulldozers begin carving up an east Jerusalem hilltop as work starts on a Jewish neighbourhood. Palestinian protest in the West Bank and Gaza Strip

Papua New Guinea: More an 2,000 civilians riot in Port doresby, against government contract with a British mercenary group to quash a nine-year tebellion on the island of Sougainville. Prime Minister, Sir Julius Chan, resigns. L. Disarmament, President Bill linton and Russian President

oris Yeltsin hold summit in elsinki and agree to slash tieir nuclear arsenals.



Saddam Hussein found himself down, but not out, while it was the end of the line for Zaire's President Mobutu

Middle East: Jewish seminary students kill a Palestinian in Hebron, sparking riots in which troops kill two Palestinians.

Zaire: President Mobutu Sese Seko declares a state of

Peru: Peruvian troops storm the Japanese ambassador's mansion in Lima, and rescue 72 hostages held for four months. All 14 rebel captors, two soldiers and one hostage die.

Zaire: Mobutu gives up power after 32 years. Zaire's new leaders rename the nation the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Laurent Kabila is sworn in as president

India/Pakistan: The countries leaders meet for the first time in four years and agree on measures to ease tension between their countries. Afghanistan: The Taliban

captures Afghanistan's northern provinces and drives warlord Rashid Dostum into exile. Sierra Leone: Rebel soldiers led by Army Major John-

ny Paul Koroma topple elected

president in a bloody coup. Europe: President Yeltsin signs a security agreement with Nato and pledges to no longer target Russia's nuclear weapons



Congo: Republic of Congo's government soldiers battle former president General Denis Sassou-Nguesso's 5,000-strong "Cobra" militias.

Cambodia: Pol Pot. ailing leader of Khmer Rouge, is captured and his 30-year guerrilla movement is over. Second Premier Hun Sen launches a coup

Europe: Nato invites Poland. Hungary and the Czech Republic to join the alliance. Cambodia: Hun Sen holds a

Cabinet meeting and declares himself the country's sole master. Pol Pot is put on trial. Bosnia: Nato holds first raid to capture Bosnian war crimes

suspects, seizing three Bosnian Serbs and killing another. Middle East: A double suicide bombing in crowded Jerusalem market kills 15 people, including the two bombers.

and injures more than 150:

AUGUST

Algeria: Attackers massacre at 47 people south of Algiers.

SEPTEMBER

least 300 villagers in Rais. Attackers slash to death another

Middle East: Suicide bombs rebel negotiators sign an accord rip through a mall in Jerusalem. ending 22-year separatist wars.

killing seven and wounding 192 Hamas claims responsibility. Israel freezes handover of West Bank land; Lebanese guerrillas and soldiers attack an Israeli commando unit in southern Lebanon, killing at least 11. Egypt: An Egyptian military court convicts 72 Islamic militants of subversion and sentences four to death; Gunmen open fire on a tour bus outside Cairo's Egyptian Museum. killing nine and injuring 50. Disarmament: 89 states ap-

prove text of treaty on global bun on land mines, but US refuses. Algeria: Armed men raid an Algerian village, killing at least 200 people.

OCTOBER

Congo: The UN orders its human rights investigators out of Congo until the government permits investigations of al-

leged massacres.

Middle East: Sheik Ahmed Yassin, the spiritual leader of Hamas, returns to Gaza Strip after being freed by Israel in exchange for two Mossad agents: Israel releases nine Palestinian prisoners as part of a swap.

Jody Williams and her International Campaign to Ban Landmines win the Nobel Peace Prize. Iraq: Baghdad bars two US arms inspectors from entering

Disarmament: American

NOVEMBER

Europe: Greek and Turkish prime ministers agree summit to implement a US-brokered. non-aggression pact.

Iraq: Iraqis turn back UN weapons inspection teams with American experts: UN votes to condemn Iraq and slaps a travel ban on selected Iraqi officials; UN withdraws all arms inspectors. They return after a Russian-brokered deal.

Egypt: Gunmen open fire on tourists outside a temple near Lusor, killing 68 and injuring 24.

DECEMBER

Bangladesh: Government and

Christmas Special Daytime calls are even encaper onthe

On the 25th and 26th December 1997 and 1st January 1998, daytime BT calls will be at the appropriate weekday evening/night-time rates. This applies to all local, national and international calls. whether direct-dialled or operator-connected, as well as BT Chargecard.

BT It's good to talk...this Christmas

8/DESPATCHES

Montserrat's refugees say it's hard to celebrate

Monsterrat used to be the place to go for a typical Caribbean Christmas. Now, the capital, Plymouth, where a big Christmas tree used to light up the picturesque harbour, has been destroyed by volcanic eruptions. Phil Davison says it is not easy for the remaining islanders to celebrate, but the seasonal spirit is not dead.

As always, Joseph, 57 and Helen, 59 will wake up on camp Joseph, a former lorry driver beds on a cold stone floor and gardener also known by alongside the old baptism font many of his friends as James. in the Anglican church of St. Peter's tomorrow. They will hitch could have homes but offered a lift to their own pentecostal us only a wooden one. That's church for a Christmas service and return to St Peter's, a ricanes every year. The roof refugee shelter for volcano vic- would blow off just like that. tims, for a Christmas dinner of This church was built to withgoatwater, a stew banded down stand hurricanes." by Montserrat's Irish settlers, rice and bananas.

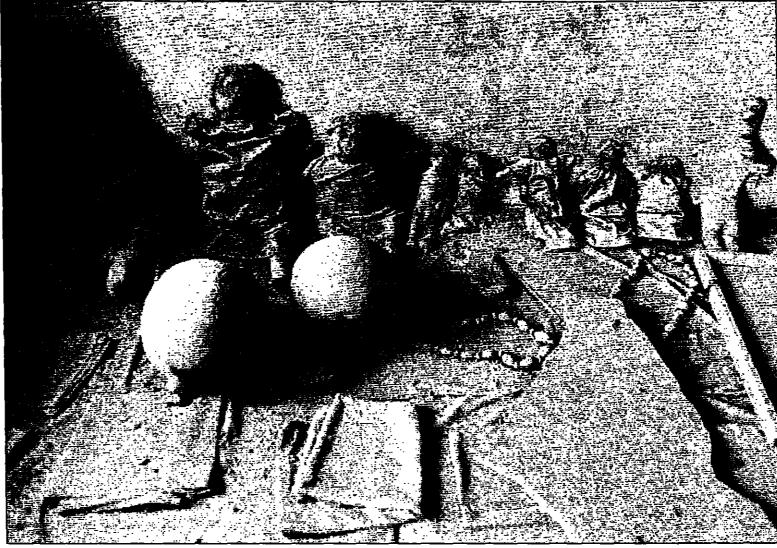
Soufrière Hills in June, along

with 30 other elderly refugees. The pews have been arranged to divide each family's space, with hospital-style standing curtains to provide a minimum of privacy.

Chickens and goats wander in and out of the open front and back doors and through the untended, knee-length grass between the old gravestones outside, where refugee women scrub and dry their laundry. The church's old outside toilet serves all 30 and the kitchens are three wooden shacks built between the graves. With only domestic electric fires for heating, it is bitterly cold at night.

'[Volcanic] ash mashed up our house on the other side of the Belham Valley," said "They came here and said we uscless. Our country gets hur-

"They've built new stone houses as refugee homes," The Hallorans have lived in added Helen, "but they're askthe church for six months, since ing rent of 150 EC [East the biggest eruption of the Caribbean] dollars a month." That's around £40 but a lot of



each receive only £35 a month in food vouchers as refugee assistance. Their home, in a newevacuated and unsafe zone, vas all they had.

Beside the old baptism font, Joseph keeps one remaining possession, a garden water pump, his pride and joy. "We used to have a lovely garden. I'm keeping the pump until we get

another," he said. "We want to get out of here but we just don't have the money," added Helen. "Some of the others use terrible bad language. The great joy of Christmas is not here."

In another shelter, a former school, only a few yards inside the current "safe zone" near the village of Salem, Montserrat's one white refugee, American Tom Mowry, 63, is slightly bet-

ter off. He has a stone-floored room to himself and the furniabandoned condominium during a quiet moment between volcanic eruptions. His valuables had been looted by robbers who must have slipped into the evacuated zone.

He may be slightly better off, but not much. He and his neighbours, some as old as 90, had

had no running water for four days. The showers are of corture he was able to get from his rugated iron, outside, 30 vards or more from the shelter. "We had to put the doors on ourselves," said Mr Mowry.

Mr Mowry is a retired psychologist and Korean war veteran who has worked around the world for world organisations including the United Nations High Commission for

Refugees in Somalia. "Now I can see the other side at first hand," he told me. His £45,000 condominium outside Plymouth is covered in ash and now totally out of bounds. "If you tried to get back in there and there was a pyroclastic flow [an

avalanche of red hot ash, gas and rock], you'd be a crispy critter pretty quickly," he noted. "Three years ago, Christmas

History note: A row of ash-covered dolls abandoned in a shop when ash and debris from a pyrociastic flow led to the evacuation of Plymouth last August

Photograph: Colin Brales

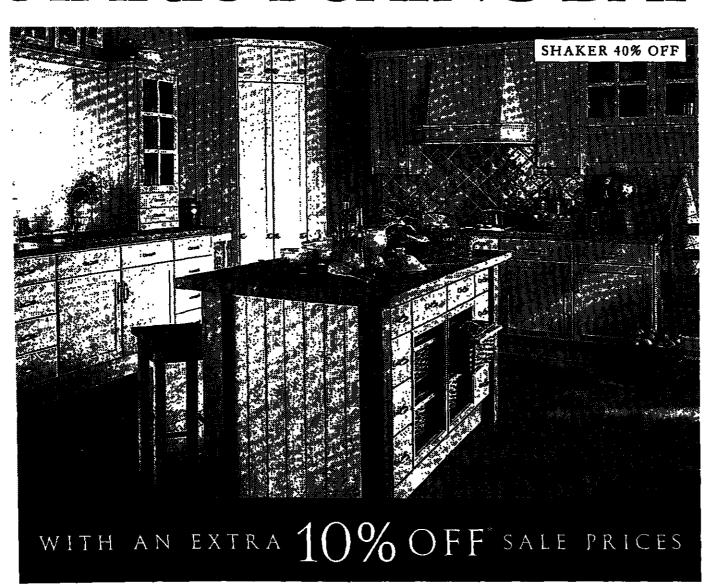
was idyllic here. This year, I'll probably slam my door and ignore it." he said. "We're not really living. We're making time. It's tragic. These people [his fellow refugees] were teachers, doctors, civil servants. It's

Did he really have to he here? "I have no place else to go," he insisted. "I travelled all my life and have no home in the US. I only get EC\$200 a month here. I'm convinced the hidden agenda is for every one to leave... At some point, it will no longer be viable. But I wouldn't be eligible to get to Britain. I'd have to find a way to get back to the States."

Back in St Peter's Anglican church, Joseph and Helen. agree. "I think they [Britain] would be happier if everyone left the island," said Joseph. "Our island has no oil, no gold. It's easy for they get rid of us."

Despite their plight, they have not lost their faith. As I left, the Hallorans led the other refugees, accompanied by a guitar, in belting out hymns. The volcano's destruction forgotten for a moment, they sang: "Oh Lord my God when I, in awesome wonder, consider all the works Thy hand hath made... How great Thou art."

HALF PRICE SALE STARTS BOXING DAY



When you buy from Magnet, you can be sure that you get a beautiful kitchen designed to meet your every need. You can also be sure that it's built to take everything life can throw at it. Right now in the Magnet January Sale, all cabinets in over 50 kitchen and bedroom ranges have been reduced, most by 50%, and there are some

great offers on whirlpool appliances too. Visit your local Magnet showroom today to take advantage of these fantastic sale offers.



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Opening hours. Westnesday 24th and Thursday 25th chosed. Friday 24th most stores will be open 10,004m; 5,004m, Saturday 27th 9,004m; 5,004m, Sanutay 28th most stores will be open 10,004m; 4,004m Discounts are off proces thanged between 14th November and 15th Freeember, "When you spend El 1891 or more on kitchen cabinet

Iranian law blamed as girl killed by drug-addict father

The cruel death of a nineyear-old girl - taken from her mother and handed to the custody of her drug-addict father after her parents' divorce - has scandalised Iran. But, as our correspondent reports from Tehran, the tragedy of Arian Golshani calls for a reform in the 'Islamic' laws which favour men over women.

Arian's photograph rests on a library shelf in Shirin Ebadi's office, a black ribbon wound round the top right-hand corner to remind visitors of the fate of the bright, open-faced child. Halfstarved and beaten by her father and step-brother, she weighed just 15kg (2.35st) when she died three months ago. And Mrs Ebadi's voice breaks when she speaks of the little girl. "Our 'Islamic' law killed Arian because our regulations insisted that she should be given to her father,"

she says. "Our law was guilty." As head of the Iranian National Association for the Sunport of Children's Rights, Mrs. Ebadi speaks her mind. She represented Arian Golshani's mother in the court case that followed the girl's death and openly blamed the misinterpretation of Koranic law when she appeared before the judicial authorities. "Arian's father, Ali, was an addict - he had already been convicted of illicit relationships with other women and had been whipped for this - so why did he have custody of Arian?" she asks.

Nahid and Ali Golshani had divorced in 1991, when Arian was three. Under Iranian law a daughter can stay with her divorced mother up to the age of seven, boys up to only two years old, providing the mother does not remarty. But Mrs Golshani remarried. Desperately unhappy, Arian was handed over to her father and his new wife, Zahra, to live with them and with Zahra's 12-year-old son by an earlier marriage, Ramtin. "They were torturing her," Mrs. Ebudi says. "Although her father had money ... they never gave her enough to eat. She was almost starving. She was so frail that when her half-brother Ramtin kicked her, she fell to the ground and started haemorrhaging." Iranian newspapers gave big

coverage to Arian's death and the majlis (parliament)



Arian, nine: Died after being handed over to her father

not qualified to look after them. "It was not what we wanted, but it was a small step forward," Mrs Ebadi says. "We want the law changed so that after a divorce the court can decide who would be best at looking after the child. The law about giving a child to the father can be changed easily. There is nothing about this in the Koran - this is an Iranian misinterpretation of Islam."

BY ROBERT **FISK**

in the event, Arian's father, Ali, was given a prison sentence of two years and a further sentence of three years "internal exile". Arian's step-brother, Ramtin, who is now 18, has been sentenced to death by hanging for killing the little girl. None of this gives any satisfaction to Mrs Ebadi. "Under our present law, if a father or a grandfather kills a child, there is no execution for this," she says. "They only have a foreigner's question. "I have. to pay blood-money to the mother ... This is a wrong legal view of children's rights." And, she adds, of women's

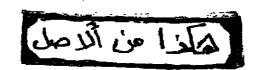
rights. Blood money for the killing of a woman is only half that for a man. More terrible still, if I kill a man, the court orders of children to relatives or or- a man kills me, my family have should be concentrating on."

phanages if their parents were to go to court and pay half the blood money to him before the court can order his execution ... And look at the ago of marriage - it's nine years old for girls and 15 for boys. But a father or grandfather can marry a little girl off under the age of nine. This doesn't happen much - but it's. the law and it must be changed. Then there is sigeli - temporary marriage - which is, unfortunately, practised."

Mrs Ebadi writes in the Tehran press insisting on the need for legislative change but her campaign has earned her hate mail and threats. "People said that I was wrong, that I was a feminist, that I was 'on the side of the West."

She is careful not to blame men for the lot of Iranian women . "We have 6,000 years of civilisation bere," she says. "The problem is that our laws come from a wrong interpretation of Isiam. We could change these laws easily ... all these new laws were written after the 1979 revolution."

Ask Mrs Ebadi about herviews on the laws governing hijab - Islamic covering for women - and she scoffs at suchbigger problems to deal with. When a husband can kill his wife and get away with it, this is a real problem - Did you know that we had 10,000 women demonstrating after Ar-. ian's death? And all of them were shouting: The law must be ... passed a new law giving custody my execution by hanging. But if reformed.' This is what we



If he could make an ass of himself, what about them?

Damien Hirst, we learn, first began dabbling in animal parts as a boyish Bottom. What other prophetic epiphanies, Paul Taylor asks, lurk in the cast-lists of school plays past?

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The schoolmaster who taught art to enfants terribles Damien Hirst and Marcus "Myra" Harvey spilt the beans to the press recently about his students' triumphs in the world of amateur drama. Hirst, it seems, wowed pupils and parents alike with his Bottom in an end-of-the-year production of A Midsummer Night's Dream. "I had to twist his arm a bit," Mr David Wood, now 60, recalled. "Once he realised it was a part he could go to town on, he was in his element." Evidently not a pinched Bottom; one wonders whether there was a whiff of formaldehyde about the ass's head. Marcus Harvey, by contrast, played in a school production of Brecht's The Caucasian Chalk Circle: "He liked to be very helpful and used to visit Mr Wood's home in Dewsbury to paint scenery for the plays staged by the town's art group," glowed one report.

The revealing light cast on the people in today's headlines by their thespian activities at school is a field of study still relatively untilled. Untilled, that is, until now. Daunted not by my chronic allergy to dust. I have spent a happy fortnight rummaging in the school magazine stacks of yesteryear and taking my trusty tape-recorder to many a Sunset Home never before lit up by a journalist's presence. As the drugget is dragged over the school nativity play for yet another year, here I am ripping the wraps off the behaviour on the boards of the makers, shakers and fakers of the People's Britain.

The five-year-old Myra Hindley caught in an indelibly touching performance as the Virgin Mary? Christine Hamilton lifting the when that wee laddie turned on a sn you could forgive him anything." roof off the school hall with a precociousiv definitive Lady Macbeth? Oh, please, let's not be obvious about this. Let's begin, instead, with the current Minister for Further 'Education, Education, Education", the very lovely Baroness Tessa Blackstone.

Tessa had us all in stitches with her gaffe-prone Mrs Malaprop - especially the night she left her beauty spot backstage in a biography of Beatrice Webb!" reminisces her drama teacher at Ware Grammar School, 86-year-old Miss "Dodie" Grange. "She took direction like a lamb and was always the first to make helpful suggestions Hall, "I was one of the twits who came and about improving Sheridan's dusty old diformance, Mrs Malaprop's mistakes, or

ear I can still hear the happy laughter Tessa's characterisation provoke

Over at La Sainte Union Convent, Bath, some four years later, a woman on the other side of the political spectrum was strutting her stuff as Shakespeare's most poetically ineffectual monarch. "What Ann Widdecombe's Richard II lacked in ethereality," reports the anonymous reviewer in the La Sainte Record, "it more than made up in the occasional searing glimpses it gave of the much firmer ruler Richard might have been, had Fate allowed him to get a proper grip on himself. Top marks to Ann for a super death scene, its pathos only enhanced by Miss Abercrombie's sterling work on the zither."

Before he went up to Durham Choir School, one Anthony Blair was causing quite a commotion at his nursery nativity play. Let Mrs Morag McTavish, who penned and directed the show, take up the story: "Och, he was a wee rascal when he was a bairn. He had a great pal, Harriet; we used to call them Noddy and Big Ears, on account of Harriet's rather large lobes. Well, I cast the two of them as the innkeeper and his wife, you know, the ones who turn Mary and Joseph away. They had a wee duet - 'No room, no room / haven't any room / haven't any room / haven't any room / in the inn, sir' - and lovely firm arm-gestures.

"Everything went swimmingly at rehearsal. The performance, on the last day of term, was what I think you media people would describe as 'a different ball game'. Blow me down, if Anthony didn't wander off and start distributing Christmas cards to the rest of the cast, leaving poor Harriet to struggle on solo, with the ox and the ass noisily ripping into their envelopes. I said to him, Why do you think Miss Robisher went to the trouble of putting a Christmas post-box outside her office?' But when that wee laddie turned on a smile, och,

Mrs McTavish is a keen follower of her pupil's continuing acting abilities: "When he read that passage from Corinihians at Princess Diana's funeral, he made it so much his own - so much, as they say these days, 'in the moment' - why, you quite forgot that St Paul had had the trouble of writ-

That behaviour in a nativity play may be a clue to a performer's future is borne out by Andrew Morton's biography of Diana. There, "in her own words", she reveals that at her prep school, Riddlesworth paid homage to the baby Jesus." It was "the school theatre bearable for her. But both



have to speak." And that's kind of prophetic, for though she did learn to use her mouth in public, it's essentially as a silent image rather than as a voice that she is destined to be remembered.

On a hunt through the yellowing glory of the programmes for the plays put on at Hendon County Grammar School, my eve hungered for some sighting of alogue. By the time we came to the first per- thrill of putting on make-up" that made Mandelson P. Would I find a record of his sizzling rendition of "Flash, Bang, Wallop, to put it, had been halved. In my mind's Heath, she reveals, "when I was asked to ten production of Half a Sixpence or of the school magazine, Spring Term 1975: "When unreciprocated crush on Ms Jones.

act, it was only on condition that I shouldn't amusing slip-up when his heavily padded Mr Pickwick launched into a slightly revised version of his signature song: "When I rule the world / every day will be the first day of Lent". No such luck. There's just one reference, where, in a list of acknowledgments in the programme to a modern-dress As You Like It, a Peter Mandelson of Form 3 is mysteriously thanked "for the loan of his Dusty Springfield record".

A reluctant thespian, then, as with

a flu bug decimated the cast and a skiing accident put Sophie Robinson in traction (get well soon. Sophie, the lacrosse team hath need of thee!), the mantle of Gwendolen Fairfax [in Wilde's Importance of Being Earnest | fell on to the surprised shoulders of Bridget Jones." The reviewer reports that Jones "acquitted herself 'presentation problems' as Tessa preferred here and at her later alma mater. West Wot A Picture!" in a never to be forgot- Independent. Here is an extract from her tone of this review that the writer had an to the scrumptiously sweet end.

And it's clear too, from the tone of the review that Stephen Fry wrote in the Uppingham magazine at the tender age of 13, precisely in what direction he was heading. He begins by chiding three Inca extras in the school's Royal Hunt of the Sun for bunking off to the pub. Then he does an aboutturn and starts to defend the truants in those creditably" and gave a special spirit to the Wildean accents that have since given plealines: "I never travel without a diary. One sure to millions: "The first duty of life is should always have something sensation- never to see through appearances. The secsomeone once well known to readers of The al to read on the train." It's clear from the ond is to see through one's disappearances

To all the above, a very Merry Christmas.

Horror of horrors! It ain't over till the tall, dark and gruesome guy sings

It's 26 years now since Christopher Lee last made a horror film. But that won't stop Marianne Brace saying 'fangs for the memory' to cinema's own Prince of Darkness.

A young couple are driving through the night in Italy when their car has a puncture. The husband urges his heavily pregnant wife to stay put while he searches for a phone. In the ditch at the edge of the road. He pension of disbelief." claws his way back up, covered from head to toe in muck, and trudges across muddy fields in es a house and knocks.

door," recalls Christopher Lee, took one look at me - this ghastly figure, obviously straight out of the grave - shrieked 'E lui!" and fainted." The unfortunate householder had been watching Lee play Count Drac-

ula only the night before. Lee is quick to add that things like that don't happen often. Despite making his name in such gore-blimey Hammer horrors as The Mummy, The Hound of the Baskervilles and The Face of Fu Manchu, Lee has also played the likes of Scaramanga in The Man with the Golden Gun, Rochefort in The Three Musketeers and, most re- ei Walter and cousin (through cently, Jinnah, the founder of Pakistan, in a film of the same name. "I haven't done a horror film for 26 years," he stresses. But the fact that he is best trace her roots back 2,000 years. known for his talent to scare is

the cross he has to bear. Now 75, Lee has been in show business for 50 years, clocking up 175 roles on the big screen and 60 on the small. He recently published an entertaining autobiography. Tall, Dark and Gruesome, to coincide with the centenary of Bram Stoker's classic Dracula novel.

It's easy to see why Lee was originally cast as Vlad the bad. He's 6ft 4, with a sepulchral voice. "People probably don't think I have a smile or ever laugh," he says jauntily. "They don't realise that, to have played some of the roles I've played, you need a tremendous sense of humour and of the ridiculous. You have to know how far you can go in making the unbelievable believable. Walk over that line and dark, the man plunges down a you lose the audience's sus-

It was humour that he shared with his great friend Peter Cushing, with whom he starred in 22 search of belo. Finally he reach-films. When the two first met, on the set of The Curse of "The owner opened the Frankenstein, Lee complained that he hadn't any lines. "You're lucky," Cushing replied. "I've read the script."

Patience and stamina proved essential for horror acting. In his time, Lee has burst through glass windows while clad only in exploding bandages; muscles have been torn from carrying a moribund maiden through a swamp with his arms fully extended; bird-eating spiders have strolled across his shoulders. He has thrashed through hawthorn bushes and been impaled enough times to rival any selfrespecting pin cushion.

The uncle of actress Harrimarriage) of author lan Fleming. Lee comes from an extraordinary family. His mother, a beautiful Italian contessa, could Her grandmother had been born in Brixton, the daughter of a coachman; at 17, she had gone to Tasmania, met Lee's aristocratic great-grandfather, who had fled Italy, and married him. "She sang with her daughters in a covered wagon to the



Christopher Lee: out for the Count again

miners and was called The Tasmanian Nightingale."

Lee's father (who ahandoned his family when Lee was just four) was a professional soldier. "Lee is a gypsy name. The word comes from the old English word meaning wood."

Once, when the actor was filming in Ireland, a man with a nose "like a pharaoh" approached Lee, asking about the origins of his family. "I was a bit alarmed when I saw all these men, with their blue-black hair and dark skins, looking at me from the other end of the pub. But then they all started nodding when I said my name."

Lee didn't begin acting until after the war. His talent to entertain lay mainly in his ability to throw knives the way others throw darts. And, over the years, he has buckled his swash with the best of them. An Italian uncle, a diplomat known

as Il Conte Rosso from his per-

litical leanings, suggested that

his pephew become an actor. "It

certainly wasn't a question of be-

ing dazzled by the glamour of `savs Lee. This was just as well, for despite some first-rate chillers like The Wicker Man, Lee's CV lists quite a few clunkers. He takes umbrage at the suggestion. Lee that it had saved the

that he may have "got stuck in company from bankruptcy. rotten films". He says be always felt that the only way to learn the job was to do it. "Having been turned down for looking too foreign and too tall, I re- movie." Jack Nicholson was alised I had to take everything I was offered simply for the experience in front of the camera."

Thoughtfully stroking his silver beard, he adds: "I have been in some very indifferent films, but I don't know any actor who hasn't. I remember one very distinguished actor saving to me after two days on set, 'We've got ourselves into a terrible situation. This is crap. But we're going to make sure it's the best crap possible."

Lee's real break came in the late 1950s when Hammer started re-making in colour the black-and-white horror classics of the Thirties. It revived a genre that had once been a major part of the studios' output. For Lee. the secret of good horror is "terrorism without risk. The fact is that people know that, when they leave the cinema, it can't really happen. I never set out to terrify people. Never."

Lee quit making horror movies when he felt they were hecoming "nauseating". Stakes through the heart are one thing. he says, severed eyeballs quite another, "In the films we did, you didn't see anything." Lee's old friend and colleague Boris Karloff used to tell him. "Leave it to the audience. They'll always

think of something worse." Those early Hammer films are now considered classics. At the time, though, they were dismissed as "vulgar", "repellent", "revolting". According to Lee, critics "had to eat their words. Hammer has been very influential, one of the most successful independent production companies of all time." Dracula grossed around \$75m and Universal's president once told If you were to look at the

history of films, you'd be surprised at some of the actors who have played in this kind of once the juvenile in films featuring Peter Lorre and Karloff; more recently, such stars as Ralph Richardson, Donald Sutherland and Charlotte Rampling have crept through crypts and vamped in vaults.

And not only actors have

same thing: 'We were brought

up on your movies." If Lee has any regrets, it's grave. that he never got to sing. The Swedish tenor Jussi Björling the Placido Domingo of his day voice. You should do something with it."

been horrified. "Spielberg, De leased his first CD. On Devils, Palma, Scorsese, Coppola, says Rogues and Other Villains, the Lee, counting them off on his actor sings a collection of songs fingers. "They all told me the ranging from cowboy ballads to Russian opera arias. It's enough to make the Count writhe in his

Christopher Lee stars in 'Dracula - Prince of Darkness' at -once told him, "You've got the 11.05pm tomorrow on Channel 4. His autobiography, Tall, Dark and Gruesome', is published by Now Lee has at last re- Victor Gollancz at £15.99

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All I want for Christmas is some peace and quiet

What are Britain's ab fab fashion designers, from Antonio Berardi to Vivienne Westwood, dreaming of finding under the Christmas tree tomorrow morning? Melanie Rickey and Holly Davies took notes from their Christmas lists.



Vivienne Westwood, fashion designer
"I would like an old-fashioned earthenwear cous-cous cooking pot, the best quality olive oil, some shallots, chillies, and spices. I don't want aluminium because it poisons

Tagine, £50, by Le Creuset, available from Elizabeth David Cook Shop, 3A North Row, The Market, London WC2, 0171-836 9167.

Ren Pearce and Andrew Fionda of glamour design duo, Pearce Fionda Ren: I'd like a crash course in motorbike riding and a Moto Guzzi when I pass. Oh, and a whole set of leathers to go with it."

Andrew: "I want a puppy. Something cute and fluffy. Actually, I'd like a Rottweiler. Otherwise, I'd like a year's pass to the Odeon cinema, or a subscription to Empire magazine or The Independent.



Ben de Lisi, evening wear designer "I'd love to find a rolled-up Rothko canvas in my stocking; if it was framed it wouldn't fit in."

Mark Rothko 1930-1970 by Diane Waldman, Thames & Hudson, £45, available to order from Dillons Arts. Long Acre, Covent Garden, WC2, 0171-836 Ĭ359.

Antoni & Alison, T-shirt designers Alison: "Old-fashioned flowery bath cubes, preferably mixed scents." Antoni: "A pair of cotton socks."

Bath cubes available from Boots the Chemist and leading department stores.



Antonio Berardi. young designer "A Chrome Heart key chain from Browns, and a Dolce & Gabbana coat."

Chrome Heart key chain, £1.500, from Browns, 23-27 South Molton Street. London W1

Owen Gaster, young designer

"In my dreams I want a black Aston Martin Lagonda, from 1979. I saw one in Brighton and it made me go weak at the knees. I'd also quite like a cat, because I'm moving house and leaving my cats with my family. Or a chunky gold chain, maybe one from Adams."

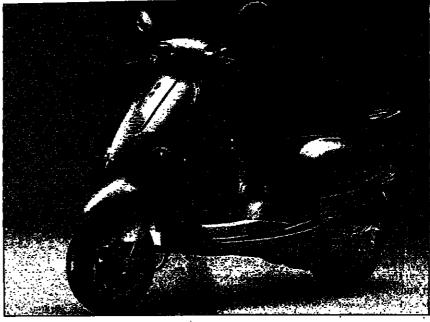




Inacio Ribeiro and Suzanne Clements of British design duo Clements Ribeiro Suzanne: "A small dog, maybe a wire-haired fox terrier, one that doesn't need too much walking and a Missoni shoulder bag. I saw it in Milan, it's leather with the knitted stripe inside. I would also like a friend for my goldfish, Cinque, his other one died. Inacio: "I would like a life. But I would really like a British buildog, I'd call her Emma?

Ally Capellino, designer and retailer
"Apart from my holiday in Cuba, which I will be on by the time you read this, I would like a simple bikini top, maybe something from Liza Bruce.





"I would love a cream Vespa Piaggio to get around on, but the only trouble is, if I get one of them I would need a Prada anorak and a bobble hat with matching mittens from Antoni & Alison too, not to mention a pair of chic goggles. If I can't have those I would love an Elsa Peretti fishbowl and two goldfish. My ultimate gift, however, is the one I got. My best friends have sent me off to a little Fijian island to relax, snorkel, play tennis and do nothing. As you read this I will be there, hopefully lying under a palm tree with a cocktail by my side reading Robinson Crusoe or something."





Ozwald Boateng, bespoke tailor "I would like an Omega Classic LED watch in silver or gold to add to my collection of Pulsar and LED watches. In my dreams I would like to drive an Aston Martin DB7 in silver which is a bit like a James Bond car, or for something really exceptional the Ferrari 550, but it is as expensive as it is

Spiers and

Paul Bernstock of

Bernstock Spiers, fashion

Thelma Spiers: "I really want a crombie-style grey wool coat by Helmut

design duo

and first finger. So far I haven't found a place to get

it done. A diamond and ruby necklace would be the ultimate

Lang, and a tattoo on my hand between my thumb

Omega Digital Seamaster watch, £2,522, from Mappin & Webb. 170 Regent Street, London W1, enqs 01703-646

Tanya Sarne, chief designer, Ghost

"I would like some sleep and peace and quiet. Santa are you

Suzie Hi she got

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Car and Signal Commission. and went to see The state of the s the server of th any company Wed to the free and a start of page the same wide. Howards and dence

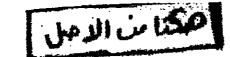


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Diary of a div



11/FEATURES

Suzie Hayman had been an only child for 40 years when she got the phone call: 'Hello, it's your sister Carol'

Suzie Hayman, agony aunt of Woman's Own', found she had a history as complex as anyone's she counsels, and it gets more complex as time goes on.

"Hello Suzie, it's your sister Carol" is a pretty ordinary way for a Sunday morning phone call to begin – except that I'm in my 40s and have spent my entire life as an only child. Carol's existence wasn't total surprise - her ringing me was.

My parents divorced when I was three months old. Once, in passing, my mothr said, "And another thing, I've never forliven your father for giving Carol back." Excuse me? Who's Carol? I did manage p pick up that Carol was his daughter rom a previous marriage, before the subct was closed, never to be mentioned pain. When I was asked to appear, in my ble as Agony Aunt, on an edition of The me, The Place on television that dealt th getting in touch with lost relatives I fund myself considering my own miss-

One of the other "experts" was Colin Hirclough of the Salvation Army Family Tacing Service and when I said on air that I could not only understand but empthise with one woman's feelings because Ì,oo, had never known my father, Colin ased me whether I would like to use their sevice to trace my father's side of my family When I asked Colin to go ahead, he quekly confirmed that my father had en married before and had a daughter, Caol, from that earlier relationship. She wa five years older than me but neither shonor my father could be traced in the UI So he placed an ad in the Johannesbur Star, asking for any news about my fathein his last known whereabouts. I didn't findmy father, but my sister found me.

We talked on the phone and wrote to eachother and then Carol made a flying visit for a short week, to the UK last Septemler, to meet me and to visit her godmother Margaret, who was her mother's cousts. It was a strange, edgy week that left u with a new tie, wanting to keep in touch and know more. It also left me, thank to Margaret, with the only full-face photol ve ever seen of our father. Three months ago, I returned the visit and travelled to South Africa, where I had been born and left over 35 years ago.

Both of us have been only children and both of us were brought up in almost total ignorance about our father. Carol had actually spent a year, when she was around three or four, fiving with our father and my mother before her own mother regained custody. But when her mother remarried Dad had never been mentioned

Both of us were, have been, are thrilled and intrigued at having a sister. She has a daughter and a son and all three can remember her interrupting a squabble of theirs once, to tell them one day they'd be grateful to have each other. It's interesting that we only describe each other as "half sisters" when explaining each other to other people. To each other, we're "sissies". She's the South African sissie born in England, I'm the English sissie born in South Africa.

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Carol and I have enough physical likeness for it to be no surprise to anyone that we are sisters. When I met her mother, I thought I was seeing my own grandmother for a second. There's no doubt that people tend to be drawn to the same template, so it shouldn't be surprising that Carol's mother Jane and my mother, and so their daughters, share a strong physical resemblance.

I met my sister, and went to South Africa with very few preconceptions and without expecting much. I was very aware that both of us could have very conflicting ideas about what we wanted, anticlpated of needed from any contact. I've talked to and heard from enough people who have run, arms wide, towards a lost relative to be met by horrified rejection or incomprehension, to know that this is a situation that has to be taken slowly, carefully and with frequent pauses for



Africa wasn't all moonlight and roses, and taking, non-stop tour with lots of activity, what underlay some prickly moments was and little pause for reflection. We had a

What happened in our week together dangers of expecting one thing and get- and aggressive, I think she's horribly lack- er meant to find, not R2D2. I needed no in Britain and our two weeks in South ting another. She had arranged a breath-





something we should have anticipated. Just because Carol had welcomed contact, was older than me and just as intelligent, didn't mean we were both as aware of the

spectacular bust-up on my last-but-one day, which in retrospect I could see coming. But even this was new and reassuring. She thinks I'm frighteningly competitive

ing in assertiveness and confidence. Yet you can, I discover, have awful fights with a sibling and still be close. We're not friends, who you choose, but relatives, that you're landed with, and that actually feels

We went to several game reserves, which I'd missed out on doing the last time I was in South Africa, and we both laid and raised quite a few ghosts when we visited my grandparents' house in Jo burga very atmospheric, melancholy and strange event. What did take me unawares was how much going back to South Africa would feel like going home.

Take the language. I hadn't realised the extent to which Afrikaans was also part of my vocabulary. I've always worn "takkies" rather than trainers, I tend to say "Shame" instead of "What a pity! " and found myself dropping into "Ach, sis" (another variant of the same) very quick-. When someone said "Wagenbikki" I minute", and when asked to look for the robot, knew it was a traffic light I was nev-

translation or explanations when ordering brinjals or biltong, started (or resumed) thinking of anything I liked as "lekker" (nice, great, pleasant), and returned the greeting "Yebo" (Yes, or an allencompassing "How's it going?" in both Siswati and Isuzulu) as if I'd been doing it all my life. As, I suppose, I had.

The reaction of friends has been illuminating. Some are thrilled, excited and delighted for me and intrigued to meet my new relatives. Some are wary, even shocked and appalled. One, who himself has an older half-sister in similar circumstances, is forceful in his insistence that he'd never want to meet her and that he can't understand why I should. As I pointed out, however, it's easy for him he has a full sister and brother and grew up knowing what it's like to have siblings, l didn't.

I was more surprised by my husband Vic. who three weeks before I left suddenly said this isn't something he'd have done. I was taken aback because he has been so supportive, so pleased for me.

My new sister - or is it 'my remarkably Jewish sister?"

I'm unmistakably Jewish. My mother is Jewish and I had always thought I got my looks from her line. I had been told that my father was not Jewish. My half-sister Carol's mother was certainly not Jewish (she was Church of England). Carol's husband is not Jewish, yet my first big impression of her daughter, my lovely niece, was how Jewish she looks. It's the mouth, it's the cheekbones and yes - it's the nose, just like mine.

So were my father's parents (or one of them) Jewish? This was certainly not the authorised version of the story; the only thing my mother has ever said about my father is that he was not Jewish. And yet when Dad was with my mother, he threw himself into the Israeli War of Independence and pulled off one of the most audacious stunts of the whole campaign; he stole a flight of planes, flew them illegally from England to Palestine, and hit the headlines of every major British newspaper of the time. Why had he been prepared to put himself at such risk, if he waso't Jewish, acknowledged or unacknowledged? I have so far found no way of discovering.

My grandmother adored my husband Vic, and as Jewish grandmothers do when they adore someone, she thought he must be Jewish. She always said his name -Cowan - must have originally been Cohen. But Vic's father was violently anti-Semitic, so it was always a bit of a dig at him to claim Vic as an hon-orary member of the people. Except, we later found out, it was true. Vic's father was

And so, as I have found time and time again when counselling others, the subconscious drive towards "marital fit" keys in to common ground that we are not even told is there.

He's been unstintingly generous in urging me to spend so much of our money on my trip. But he was honest in pointing out, as I don't think I quite appreciated, how little he does or can, share how I feel. But then Vic, too, has a brother and was brought up with all the drawbacks and negatives of sibling rivalry and jealousy. He has the baggage of having a brother and not being able to remember anything positive about that bond while I have the baggage of having no one.

I went back to South Africa to meet a family I hadn't known I had - a half sister, a niece and a nephew. In the process I recovered parts of myself I hadn't realised I missed, and found exactly what I always thought siblings provide for each other - a mirror image, that can be reassuring as well as disconcerting and sometimes uncomfortable; a link and sense of belonging; some companionship, some emulation, some competition. We have startling parallels in our lives and our likes and dislikes, and some tastes that are worlds apart. But we are sisters, and that's new to me, and fun.



BELOVED AND BONK Diary of a divorce

Christmas Eve and I don't know how Γm going to feel. I have this nasty suspicion that there is one more pothole of grief into which I must fall and get soaked and muddy before the whole deal is over. Probably at around 5am on the 25th when I wake up with a hangover, alone on Christmas morning for the first time in 18 years. But not really alone because I'll probably have Buster and Bunny in bed with me, making the most of my new Very Nice Chap's absence to wrap themselves around my body.

Very Nice Chap (hereafter VNC), being young and unmarried, is going home for Christmas to be with his parents. At least my decree absolute will do a bit of good there, removing some of my status as Female

I'm getting a decree absolute for Predator. Because, let's face it. Christmas. It's through on on the list of parental nightmares, older married women with children come somewhere around drunken car crashes and bit parts in Trainspotting. At least as a divorcee I will no longer be forcing their little lad into adultery. In an attempt to convince VNC's parents that I wasn't biting him into pieces to be consumed at my leisure we went to visit at the weekend. VNC was confident that meeting me would allay their fears. I was confident that meeting me would give them a nervous breakdown. I'm no good at not swearing or laying off tasteless jokes about the Royal Family for two hours let alone two days.

By the time the long drive Up North was done I was almost speechless with nerves. "I'm 39 years old," I squeaked to myself inside, "I'm an adult." But my identity as an adult seemed to have dropped out of the car going over the Humber Bridge. I was 12 years old and up before the headmistress for being very naughty indeed.

We arrived. Parked. Stepped out into the frosty street. I had expected something dour, grey and post-industrial. A place where even the architecture would label me as a bohemian Southerner with the moral fibre of a slipper limpet (Crepidula fornicata). What I found was that I had entered a Janet Artherg world where every red brick in every house had its place and was glowing with friendliness. The floodlit Minster peeping over the rooftops, the yellow light in the windows and the clipped icy trees in the front gardens, all said this is a wanted for my kids dammit.

all families stay together, where the milk is delivered in time for breakfast and there is always cake for tea. This was the place that had made VNC into a VNC. Where magical childhood stuff happened all the time without anyone having to flash a Mastercard, or plan it for three

months in advance. VNC walked up the path in the middle of the front garden. to a door in the middle of the house. He walked in without key or knocking, rightly certain of the welcome we'd get: warm. Open. Not the armed combat you have waiting to offer Parental Nightmare number 23. And then I was in danger of weeping my way across the threshold. This is what I had

place where everything is as it This feeling of safety and rightshould be. This is a place where ness. This is what I'd have liked myself, a parental front door still open in adulthood to go through without question. A place where you could go and make yourself toast and Marmite at bedtime but still be told off about putting your feet on the furniture.

So anyway, I stopped being nervous and began to enjoy a weekend off being an adult. A weekend staying with somebody else's Muramy and Daddy who are just like your own Mummy and Daddy only nicer (or in my case alive). I ate roast and gravy, played whist, spent ages in the bath and was floodgiant pumpkin, the time his sister nearly fell down Snowden, the time his Mum had hyster-

ics burying a rat and his dad climbed on the roof of Beverly Races. I even enjoyed sleeping alone in the spare room while VNC was tucked up in his old bed next door. Saying good night with smouldering repressed passion at the bedroom door is something I haven't experienced since I was 17. As a fuel for the first months of a new relationship I'd rate it along with the stuff they use to get rockets into orbit. Tucked up under my rose petal quilt and dressed in the only nightie I could find at home which approaches virginal, I let the longterm homely rightness of the house sink into me. And prayed ed with the stories of another to the God of rose petal quilts family: the time VNC grew a and trellis wallpaper that second time around I could build a littie of this world for myself.

ties? A Korean collapse affects

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Japanese trade and investment much more seriously than those of any other country. Yet Japanese'capacity to advise and assist Scoul is hampered not just by the burdens of history but Tokyo's willed immaturity in diplomacy and defence policy. What is so clearly missing in Japan is a younger generation, in economic life as much as in-party politics, angry and energetic. What has come over us? Christ-

mas Eve beckons and we're blathering about Japan? Yes, because a central lesson for the year ahead is that today the economics and politics of the "Far" East are actually very close to home. Their success or failure touches our own lives and prospects. But politically and culturally they are much misunderstood. and little studied. The agony of Seoul doesn't touch us quite as it. would if the crisis was happening it. Paris or Toronto. But that's out-of date thinking: our prosperity part, depends on how successfully bravely and quickly these too nation. reform themselves. In the year ahead, they will need all the luck and courage they can muster.

Our humble offering to the East: the secret of success



EDITOR: ANDREW MARK DEPUTY EDITOR: COLIN HUGHES. ADDRESS: I CANADA SQUARE. CANARY WHARE **LONDON E14 5DL** TELEPHONE: 0171 293 2000 OR 0171 345 2000 FAX: 0171 293 2435 OR 0171-345 2435

Should we gloat? After years of being told that the Anglo-Saxon model of capitalism was out of date, and that salvation lay in slavishly copying the Tiger economies of the East, we see South Korea in deep, deep trouble. No, we shouldn't gloat, partly because gloating is unattractive and partly because our own system is so far from perfect. Perhaps, instead, we should lament, because of the investment consequences for British workers who had hoped for Korean-backed jobs. But certainly, we should look and learn the lessons of what is shaping up to be a very nasty economic smash indeed.

South Korea's problems will not be cured by the recent change of government there, nor by an IMF bail-out. It won't be cured either though this thought has been seriously entertained in some allegedly geopolitically sophisticated quarters - by some sudden invasion of the South by Comrade Kim II Jung's war machine, forcing Seoul to get its act together. The President-elect Kim Dae Jung says they never told him things were as serious as they are. Hardly surprising: for what is wrong in South Korea



is the system, an entire network of dependencies between firms, banks and the political class, and beyond them organised labour with its expectations of jobs and rewards in an industrial sector that is, to put it perfunctorily, half bankrupt.

The blunt fact is that the

Korean post-war system does not fit conglomerates reconsidering in and make relationships between the world of the 21st century. Changing will be painful. The political fall-out from the International Monetary Fund's demarche in South Korea has yet to register - think of Britain's trauma in the mid-Seventies when the Cabinet sat to take dictation from the world bankers, and then multiply that. This time, the IMF loan is only a starting-point. Next year, and many years to come. will see a drastic restructuring of both social and economic relationships within South Korea. Autarky is not an option, as the merest glimpse through the wire northwards towards Pyongvang is enough to show. Somehow the Korean political class will have to find the resources to force nation and economy to take and keep on taking some nasty medicine. Meanwhile, we are not idle

spectators at Korean and Japanese convulsions (and let us all hold our breath for China). That stock phrase of the decade, globalisation, is now seen to have concrete meaning for the workforces of South Wales and Tyneside. It means Lucky Goldstar or the other Korean pension fund does not contain stock vulnerable to decline and fall in one of those markets? And yet - to say this risks hubris - the British system appears in its fundamentals in relatively good shape and as such offers - meekly offers - a lesson or two. This is no compliment to Gordon Brown or even to Kenneth Clarke but perhaps, yet again, a tribute to the necessity of Thatcherism. Though we are still counting the considerable social cost, the British economy did survive a necessary trial by liberalisation. It hurt but it worked. True,

vestment projects. And it is not just

industrial workers who are going to

be caught in the Korean knock-on

through Tokyo to Wall Street: whose

preference for short-term profitability over corporate (and employment) growth. None the less, Big Bang worked. It sharpened financial performance

we can hardly claim a bill of health

that does not have large doctors'

queries on it. The flow of capital

through the banks into productive

investment is far from perfect;

there does seem to be a national

It is indeed to Japan that attention starts to turn even as markets collapse and politicians weep in Seoul. When will the Japanese lay hold of their regional responsibili-

parent. It destroyed the remnants

of the closed corporatist world.

What you see - critically - in terms

of decisions by politicians, regula-

tors and central bankers is largely

what you get. If most of Britain is

having a good Christmas, that is

non-transparency has been the

post-war norm, along with a belief

in the capacity of governments to

make and move markets. We need

to be careful in our use of language.

Some find it all too easy to mount

the pulpit steps and start preaching

liberal epistles to the Confucians.

There is an incipient danger of

racism at worst and, at best, of fate-

tempting arrogance in suggesting

that we, the West, have the key to

their salvation. They alone possess

that. The Japanese economy in

particular is a big and powerful beast

which, if sluggish, may spring again.

In Seoul and Tokyo, though,

partly why.

LETTERS

Blair's project

Sir: Sadly a pattern begins to

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1) Make welfare savings from those most in need, not those best able to lose benefits. 2) (Rightly) reduce tax ex-

emptions for the moderately well-off while (wrongly) justifying tax havens for the super-rich. 3) Make university fees a

kind of inheritance tax, related to parents' income not the wealth of all who gain from graduate skills. Therefore I predict: (4) pre-

serve the extra payments per student for Oxbridge colleges. On the whole they have the brightest students, the biggest incomes, the greatest reserves, the readiest donations. Of course they need the most state support. Is this the shape of Blairisms

to come? PETER ROBB London N1

Sir: There is indeed no doubt, as Polly Toynbee says (article, 22 December), that the whole welfare system needs reform. It is far from the platitude that she assumes, however, to say that unemployed people should be

"prodded" into work. Whilst it is true that National Insurance should no longer pay out according to notional contributions made, it is far from obvious that all payments should be made according to need. Assessment of need, otherwise known as means-testing, has, when applied to state benefits, the very undesirable sideeffect of creating poverty traps. It is in any case redundant when we have an existing sys-

of income tax. What is so degrading, even unethical, about the present system is the withdrawal of benefit from a marginally employable person who starts to earn a little money. This is the equivalent of an income tax rate of at least 70 per cent and sometimes over 100 per cent on the carnings of the very poorest of our people. They don't need "prodding". Removal of the present disincentives would suffice. Benefits can

tem of assessment in the form

be universal while income tax looks after the inequality. OWEN DUMPLETON Woshington, Tyne and Wear

people claiming benefit not designed for them? (David Aaronovitch, 18 December).

Incapacity benefit, introduced by the last government, is accompanied by a strict and terrifying medical examination (less like a medical, more like being on trial, in my experience.)

To hear some people talk one would think that benefit claimants receive lottery-size fortunes each week. In fact few benefits exceed £3,000 a year and some, including incapacity benefit, are taxed. Mr Aaronovitch's world of

work and good health is miles away from the lives we disabled people live, as I can testify, having journeyed from the former they are to sit by. to the latter. All we ask for is a fair deal; the ongoing debate shows that there is little understanding of the world of disability and what it involves. DAVID SEYMOUR London SE4

Sir: Fran Abrams kindly quotes my maiden speech ("Maiden speeches that came top of the class", 22 December) but unfortunately repeats comments attributed to me in connection with the debate at the Parliamentary Labour Party meeting on the subject of lone parent benefits.

Can I, once and for all, set the record straight by confirming that I actually said that if we felt benefit payments alone would meet the needs of lone parents we "should be paying a realistic amount of £50 to £60 per week not the price of a couple of packets of cigarettes".

I certainly did not demean the importance of the benefit to lone parents; nor would I. It is unfortunate that the strength of feeling during the debate was such as to lead some comrades to put out the inaccurate and damaging version that Fran Abrams unwittingly repeated. STEVE POUND MP (Ealing North, Lab) House of Commons

Burn or recycle

Sir: Reading the article (6 December) which asked "Should you recycle this paper?" I was Sir: Who are these armies of pleased to see reference to our research comparing the environmental credentials of recycling and other types of waste management. I was surprised though to see that I apparently recommend that people burn waste paper in their fireplaces.

This is not the case, and from an environmental viewpoint it would be quite damaging (and probably illegal in most UK cities). Our research investigated the burning of waste paper in modern "energy from waste" plants, which have extensive environmental controls and recover the energy content of the paper very efficiently. Domestic fireplaces are smoky MILES HOWARTH and inefficient - however nice Chelmsford, Essex

Our research showed that recycling is much better for the environment than landfilling, but waste might be better still. However, modern energy from waste plants are at present few and far between. So don't stop recycling now, but as a society we need to think long and hard about waste strategies for the future. Dr MATTHEW LEACH

Imperial College

Faith for today

earth, not a subject for intellogical system.

into context. We are not se-

Sir: Paul Vallely's forward-looking articles on religion (20 December) rightly stress the need for religion to be recognised as a vital part of our life here on lectual gymnastics nor a mystic means of communication, even of salvation, open only to true believers in a particular theo-

The three phases of religion identified by Friedrich von Hügel - institutional, intellectual and emotional (perhaps better termed as spiritual) - are all indispensable; but moving to an understanding of the next should not imply rejection of the last, merely the need to put it

quential pilgrims; we do not need to leave behind our cultural roots, nor our intellect, when entering spiritual territory.

How can we promote a common human purpose and faith which is not merely relativist. pluralist or materialist? How can we respond to those who seek spirituality but would never enter a church? In the UK the liberal religious witness -Sea of Faith, Unitarians etc. seeks to provide a public forum and a structure for self-devel-

opment which encourages spiritual progress. Religion fit for the 21st century, incorporating all three of von Hügel's elements, will only emerge if we can move beyond the distortions and limited vision too evident in both anti-religion and institutionalised religion.

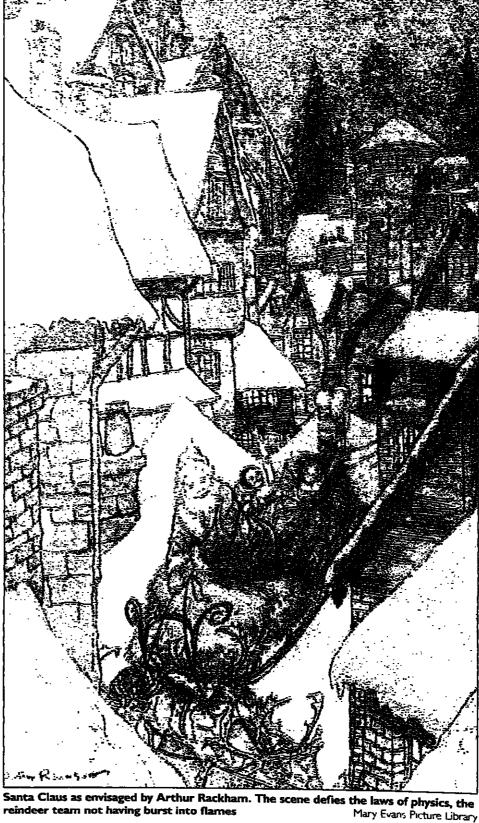
Sir: Road pricing looks inthat recovering energy from the creasingly impracticable, increasing fuel tax is said to disadvantage rural residents and other forms of taxation upon the motorist are likely to prove an electoral liability.

> Perhaps, rather than being beastly to motorists, we should consider giving citizens who do not possess a driving licence free universal travel passes for buses, metros, undergrounds, trams and trains, perhaps taxis too. This would be a positive advantage to the young, the old and the poor.

Funding could be raised by distributing the cost, as increased VAT, uniformly over all forms of energy. STEVEN FORD Haydon Bridge, Northumberland

Film invasion

Sir: For 22 December and 23 December the five television channels billed 40 films, of which 37 were advertised as US and only three as UK. If British culture cannot fill the bill, the channels should be on the air for less time. BASIL KENTISH Colchester, Essex



reindeer team not having burst into flames

Supersonic Santa 1

Sir. Does Santa Claus exist.

There are perhaps 378 nillion Christian children in the world. At an average rate of 3.5 children per household, hat comes to 108 million hones, presuming that there is at East one good child in each.

Santa has about 31 hours of Christmas to work with, thanks to the different time zones. This works out to 967.7 visis per second. So Santa has around a thousandth of a second topark the sleigh, hop out, jump down the chimney, fill the stockings, distribute the remaining presents under the tree, eatwhatever snacks have been left for him, get back up the chimney, jump into the sleigh and get on to the next house.

Assuming that each of these 108 million stops is evenly distributed around the earth, Santa's sleigh is moving at 650 miles per second.

Assuming that each child gets nothing more than a medium-sized Lego set (two pounds), the sleigh is carrying over 500,000 tons. A conventional reindeer can pull no more than 300 pounds. Even. granting that the flying reindeer could pull ten times the normal amount, Santa would need 360,000 of them. This increases the payload, not counting the weight of the sleigh, another 54,000 tons.

A 600,000-ton vehicle travelling at 650 miles per second creates enormous air resistance. This would heat up the reindeer in the same fashion as a spacecraft re-entering the earth's atmosphere. The lead pair of reindeer would absorb 14.3 quintillion joules of energy per second each. They would burst into flames almost instantaneously. The entire team would be vaporized within 4.26 thousandths of a second, or about the time Santa reached the fifth house. DJR POWELL

Atomic Weapons Establishment Aldermaston. Berkshire

Everyone has a funny turn when they try to draw a Christmas tree



KINGTON

Today we bring you the second half of this year's Melvyn Bragg Christmas Science Lecture, an annual institution which aims to bring scientific awareness to the public by bringing out the scientific principles on which Christmas is based. Professor Gene Jones is this year's speaker.

It is commonly believed that when the human body undergoes heat loss, most of it goes from the top of the head - in other words, that if we wear a hat, we prevent a lot of the heat from leaving the body. This is certainly true in most circumstances, but not so true when we are out for a long, muddy, Christmas Day walk wearing wellington boots. The pres-

ence of the feet in the boots creates an enclosed warm, damp microclimate which pushes a funnel of warm, damp air up the side of the legs and out into the atmosphere, and common sense tells us, never mind science, that this causes a tremendous amount of heat loss.

Yet although we are sensible enough to wear hats, we never have the sense to take the same precautions when it comes to gum boots. To prevent heat loss from gum boots, all you need do is stitch or glue some sort of lapping round the top of the boots, a bit like a pelmet, perhaps, which would act as a stopper to all that

warmth escaping... What's that, sir? It would look rather stupid? Of course do that. Now, take the drawing it would, but all sensible things look stupid to begin with. Gum boots looked stupid to begin with. Baseball caps worn backwards look stupid. Actually. baseball caps worn the right way round look pretty stupid, especially in a country where baseball isn't played...

Now, you may get the impression from what I have been saying that science can explain everything, but of course this isn't so. And indeed there is one Christmas mystery that science has never explained, and that is to do with Christmas trees. Here's a little experiment

you can do at home. Get a child or a grown-up to do a drawing of a Christmas tree. We can all

and put it beside your own Christmas tree, and ask the artist if they can spot the difference. Usually, they can't. But the fact of the matter is that we always draw Christmas trees with the branches drooping down. And yet Christmas trees in real life have branches that stick up. We draw them sticking downwards and see them sticking upwards. We don't do it on purpose. We do it because we have been taught to do it that way and yet nobody, until it is pointed out to them, ever realises that the two things are

Why is this? How come we can be taught to do something which is the di-

opposite to each other.

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rect opposite of our experience? Is there some genetic flaw in our visual make-up?

Is there a human predisposition to certain ways of drawing the world?

No - it's because we're stupid and lazy.

We also know that Christmas trees are highly inflammable, and yet for many years we insisted on putting candles on the tree branches. No doubt there were many fires and many houses burned down, yet it was not until the invention of electric light that candles were phased out, even though there is always one dud bulb in any set of Christmas lights.

Does this mean that there was always one did candle on every Christmas tree in the old days?

We simply don't know. But it's a pleasing thought.

Incidentally, when it come to the time to make a bonfire after Christmas of all the wrappings and the tree and boxes, remember that Fulbright's November 5th Law operates here as well. Fulbright's Law of November 5th states that when you put all the dead fireworks on a bonfire on 6 November, there will always be enough explosive left to make a few bangs. By extension, when you put the Christmas rubbish on the fire. there will always be a few gifts still in there. So go through the

paper first! And finally, the big question:

can reindeer really fly? The scientific answer to this is, of course; no they can't. But the question a scientist would like to ask is this: why do people THINK that reindeer can fly? And even better, why do people think that when reindeer fly, they move their legs and gallop in mid-air, even though this wouldn't help them to fly at all?

(And who was it once pointed out that when Superman flies through the air, there is no need for him to be in a diving position - he could simply sit in mid-air like a first-class airline

passenger, reading a magazine?) I hope to answer these and many more questions in next year's Melvyn Bragg Christmas Science Lecture.

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امکان الامل 13/COMMENT

On the unseasonal death of a pet



RUPERT CORNWELL THE RUNT OF THE LITTER

My eight-year-old son had always wanted a pet, and the plan had been in the works for more than a year, ever since we knew we would be returning from America. Obviously, given Britain's sayage quarantine laws, it was pointless to do anything before we got here. But once established in a new home, we would bow to the ceaseless pressure and buy him one. He plumped for a kitten - and what better present to mark his first Christmas in England? But this is a most unChristmassy tale of a plan which went tragically wrong.

Now kittens are not that easy

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to find in mid-December. Nature's ancestral mechanisms, apparently, arrange things so that cats tend not to give birth when the weather is cold. But a pet shop in Bromley did have some for sale. And so last Wednesday my wife and son returned from a short expedition to suburban Kent with the required paraphernalia of cat ownership: a cosy padded basket, pet food, litter boxes, a scratching pole and, most important one tiny, adorable kitten. She was seven weeks old and the runt of the litter, scarcely longer than the outstretched palm of a hand. No modish names for her. Fluffy, the little boy insisted, and Fluffy she was called. And that should have been that. A child's wish comes true; and a little furry creature, scarcely longer than an outstretched hand, lives happily

And for a couple of days exactly what kittens are supus, played with bits of string, and chased her own shadow. She purred louder than a buzzsaw and flopped her way up the steps of a staircase just like the puppies in Lady and The Tramp. My son was in seventh heaven. But then the problems started.

First she wouldn't eat. Then she would - only to develop diarrhoea. We called the vet. Put her on water for a day, he advised. We did, and Fluffy seemed to regain her spirits. By Sunday evening she was weak, but once more eager for food. A good sign, we thought, and went to bed relieved. Overnight however, she was struck down.

The next morning she was so feeble could not stand, her four legs splaying out beneath her each time she tried. So my son held her on his lap and stroked ber, as we tried on the vet's advice to at least get some water down her. But it was plainly too late. By now Fluffy was emitting rasping coughs that made her tiny body shudder. If there's such a thing as a death rattle, that was it.

Nor was there anything to be done at the vet's. Fluffy was too small to take a drip. My wife and son went home to go through the motions of preparing for Christmas, while waiting for the inevitable news. In mid-afternoon the phone rang. Fluffy had not made it. The vet did not know what she had died of, but told us we could have an autopsy carried out if we wanted. We did not. He then asked if we wanted the body. We did.

And so on a dank and dark winter's evening, Fluffy was buried at the bottom of a muddy garden in south London. Four feet deep, the vet had recommended, otherwise the foxes common to those parts might get to her. But try digging a four foot hole. My wife managed but half of that, before laying the tiny cadaver to rest in a biscuit box. Prayers were said. My son phoned me in the office to instruct me to bring some flowers when I came home that evening. I returned armed with a bunch of chrysantheniums from the garage over the road. Later, in a second ceremony, we solemn-

From the conventional perspective of Christmas, I suppose, it was better that if she was going to die, she went quickly. What would more comprehensively wreck the season of merrymaking, than an extended deathbed agony that might have lasted until Christmas Day itself? Wasn't Christmas meant to be about children being happy? A couple of days on howev-

ly laid them on the grave.

er. I have to admit, this domestic calamity has acquired a not unwelcome astringency. It's more than 20 years since I spent Christmas in England, and I'd forgotten how, more than any nation on earth, we've festival into a saccharine-clad sion of reality. Fluffy's brief existence chez the Cornwells began as part of the illusion. By the end though, she was a reminder of how even in this week life goes on. We have constructed a three-week carnival of self-indulgence around the tale of an infant's miraculous birth 2,000 years ago. In the real world however, people and pets not only are born over Christmas. They also die then. But enough of moralising. My son said it was the saddest moment of his life. For a couple of adults too, it came close. One way and another, we won't quickly forget this first Christ-



Pupils from the Royal Ballet School rehearsing yesterday for 'Peter and the Wolf' at the Royal Festival Hall, London

Pantomimes, holly, roast turkey - we are enslaved by the fantasy of a real Christmas



SUZANNE **MOORE POST-MODERN**

everything was fine. Fluffy did turned Christianity's second They started in October. "Please Mum" begged my chilhave a real Christmas?" "Not like last year," they chorused. Last year we spent Christmas in Bethlehem which, according to my kids, was "not Christmassy enough". I know what they meant. Sure, He might have been born there but a couple of straggly attempts at a Christmas tree, one string of fairy lights and an enormous poster of Yasser Arafat cannot compete with the wonders of Wood Green Shopping City.

One of the results of their gloriously multi-cultural education is that neither of my children seem to realise that Christmas might have anything

that Bethlehem is in Arab territory they felt was no excuse for this poor show. Although they can recite the legend of Rama and Sita in great detail they tend to regard all religious festivals as largely secular events, with Christmas just being the biggest and the best

Anyway, this year they are

going to get their real Christ-

mas as they have grounded me. No exotic destinations for us. No we are going to do it properly. Whatever that means. For as I leaf through the Christmas schedules and catalogues, I notice how often the word real crops up. I have watched Gaby Roslin's Real Christmas show: in which ordinary people video seen all year. I also see there is a programme called Nigel Slater's Real Christmas Dinner giving us the real taste of Christmas. I have bought "Real" Christmas crackers and a real tree and, like every other woman I know, I am exhausted rushing around to provide this level of realness for my family.

Yesterday, under seasonal strain in the supermarket, I cracked. I bought everything that I could that was readymade, pre-prepared, "just needs heating". So I notice, did

whisper to each other in the aisles about the madness that has overtaken them. Yet I wonder what all this emphasis on realness is about. What does our anxiety about having a real Christmas betray? What happens to you if you fail in the "Real Christmas" stakes? Are you a lesser, sadder person? What is it that propels so many

of us to try and replicate what

is not actually a "real", but an

imaginary Christmas that only

exists somewhere in our minds and on our Christmas cards? It is not simply that we want to recreate the Christmas of our childhoods, for even then I remember feeling that other famuses oud it better than mine, that about them afterwards. This we were somehow failing. No, was the saddest thing I have we want to create a Christmas that belongs to some collective memory which is not actually our own but lodged deep in the culture. That memory of a Christmas that is rural, communal, spontaneous is the exact opposite to what most of end up with. Christmas may be a public

holiday but it is privatised ritual. We each sit in our own little households, all doing much the same stuff and imaging that someone out there is doing it all perfectly, that their Christmas is somehow the real

pered trolley zombies, who are non-starters in the real Christmas stakes. They are immediately disqualified. So how would we categorise the Christmases that don't make the grade? The antithesis of the real Christmases of the imagination? How many of us endure False Christmases, Noels that are not quite good enough? For isn't that the common-

est complaint about the whole damn enterprise. It has been removed from its roots, it's too commercial, it doesn't mean anything any more, it goes on too long, it's just about consumerism, the meaning has been sucked out. We yearn for it all to mean something, something secular and acceptable, ig about feelings mstead of objects, about people instead of profit. And we look for the odd glimmer of this, as if to reassure ourselves that all the material crassness cannot entirely drain the event of some deeper meaning.

Yet instead of complaining the idea that Christmas isn't like it used to be, why can't we just accept that it is a simulacrum, a simulation, a copy, of something for which there is no original? Then we could worry less about whether it is all real enough or whether it is all too artificial, and accept it for the hizarre post-modern mishthing. Those who are too poor mash that it is. There is almost

to do with Christianity. The fact many of the other bad-tem- or too alone or too depressed nothing about Christmas which is authentic, so why pretend

The meat that most of us will

eat has come from birds whose breasts have been so genetically enlarged that they cannot stand up by themselves. The traditions we make so much of, from Father Christmas onwards, are all modern inventions less than a hundred years old. Most of us will organise our Christmas dinner not around the church service but around what is on Just how slickly post-modern

the whole thing has become was brought home to me last week at a pantomime. Those who think that pantos are packed with rich vaudevillian tradition should think again. Their references are not to theatre but to TV, with their B-list celebs. jokes about Sky Television and, I'm afraid, Dennis Waterman singing the theme tune from Minder - I Could Be So Good For You - in the middle of Aladdin. This pantomime consisted of a number of ill-fitting

themes woven together. No one seems to mind if the joins are visible: throw in a bit of scap opera, a bit of Chinese legend, a bit of pop culture, a bit of Disney and hey you have a show.

The same could be said of the modern Christmas, which is a jumble of themes and sentiments parceled up together. Let's not kid ourselves there is any great continuity with the past. A contemporary Yule is really something of a pick-andmix experience. We take the things we want, don't bother with what we don't. What is oppressive is trying to do it all and do it all right, I say let it go. Why can't we do some of it wrong?

Once we liberate ourselves from the idea of a real Christmas then we can revel in our fakes ones, genuinely enjoying the inauthentic, the artificial, the unnatural. Herein lies the true spirit of Christmas, which is that we make the whole thing up. Over and over again. So here's wishing you all a truly unreal Christmas and a mag-

Six predictions from five years past, and six for the future



HAMISH **McRAE** THE COMING RECESSION

People in the prediction business rarely check back on their past performance - so I am grateful to a reader who has sent me a copy of an article I wrote in December 1992 giving half a dozen ideas that were deeply unfashionable then, but which seemed to be "decent odds-on bets" for 1997. The result? Several near bulleyes, one poor shot and one catastrophe.

We had just been ejected unceremoniously from the ERM and were still in the midst of recession, so the first prediction - that Britain was entering a period of relative prosperity when the country will gain ground in terms of economic growth against the rest of Europe" -did seem a bit extreme. Actually we have done even better, for every single year since 1992 we have grown faster than France and Germany, and in four out of the five years faster

The other two big macro-economic forecasts

would head down and "by the last years of the century (maybe by 1997, but it could take a little longer) Britain will have as near zero inflation as makes no difference". Maybe we do have to wait a little longer, but the latest projection for the UK GDP deflator - the best measure of overall inflation in an economy - is 2.5 per cent. and for the G7 economies, 1.7 per cent. Not quite there, but heading in the right direction.

As for unemployment, we have done even better than the "less than 6 per cent by 1997. below the European average" that I expected. Even if the official unemployment total of 5.1 per cent overstates the fall, this is still remarkable; I don't think on the other hand, I had fully grasped the possibility that European unemployment would rise by as much as it has. There were two micro-economic forecasts,

one of which I got right, the other wrong. The one which was right was that house prices would not soar "although they may rise a little in money terms, say by about 15 per cent over the next five years". The actual rise in the Halifax house price index from the last quarter of 1992 to November 1997 (the latest figure) I calculate at a little under 14 per cent, but would admit hitting that one so close was a bit of a fluke.

I missed the other specific projection: that Britain would have the second largest car industry in Europe after Germany, thanks to the build-up of Japanese manufacturers. Production has risen and we are ahead of Italy, but we are still far behind France, as well as Germany.

The other and worse miss was the one political prediction I made. Given the success of the economy and the divided opposition, I thought that the Tories would be safe for another term and I predicted "a Tory majority of 45 in October 1996". Hopeless. My only defence

have also stood up pretty well. World inflation is that at the time John Smith was still leader of the Opposition and I did not appreciate that the voters might be offered Tory economic policies by a Labour leader. My colleagues unkindly suggest that I should stick to economic predictions and leave the politics to others.

That is the track record: what of the future - the year 2002 - following the same pattern of five economic predictions and one political one? It is much harder, largely because in 1992 things were so dreadful that they had to get better, whereas now the domestic economy seems OK, but there are powerful external uncertainties that are very difficult to call.

Starting from a global viewpoint, it does seem clear that we are now definitely in a period of global deflation, so prediction number one is that some of the G7 countries, probably including Britain, will experience falling price levels at some stage in the next five years.

Does that also mean global recession? Not necessarily, but I think the balance of probability is that there will indeed be another world recession in the early part of the next century. The end of the long American boom, the deflationary forces from East Asia, the uncertainty associated with the introduction of a single currency in Europe and the Millennium computer bug will combine to make another world recession probable before 2002 - prediction number two. We may be less hard hit than most. particularly if we have remained outside the single currency, but we will still be affected.

Will the "euro" happen? I suppose that the probability is that it will, but I do not believe this is the certainty that European politicians currently think. If it happens, I am sure that it will collapse; but I don't think collapse will come immediately, because initially the political glue will be too strong. Collapse

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will come in 10 or 15 years' time, not five. Prediction number three concerns unemployment. Managing the UK economy through global recession will be difficult, particularly so for an inexperienced UK government that is bound to make mistakes. It would be surprising if unemployment were not higher in 2002 than it is now, though I would expect it still to be below continental levels.

Meanwhile the shape of the economy will continue to change, with such industries as communications and entertainment continuing to grow while manufacturing continues to shrink. So prediction number four is that employment in manufacturing will be lower in 2002 than in 1997, despite general economic growth.

Number five is the positive side of that: we will have increased world market share in the communications and entertainment industries. As a result physical trade with the European Union will have become less important relative to service trade with the rest of the world. The economy will be slowly reorienting itself away from Europe, not for any political reason but because ties of language and culture are becoming more important in trade than physical

And six? This general picture is one of the UK continuing to do quite well relative to other developed countries, but having to struggle into the head-wind of the post-Millennial economic slump. The present Government will, inevitably, catch some of the blame, but I do not think the electorate will be sufficiently miserable yet to want to throw it out of office. That comes in 2005. So yes, I envisage Labour getting back with a majority of 45 in October 2001.

And if that, given my past performance, seems the kiss of death for Mr Blair and his colleagues - sorry.



It is hard to imagine a Hollywood without Dawn Steel, the New York vulgarian workaholic who rose to the uppermost echelons of, respectively, Paramount, Columbia and Disney.

Famed for her "big hair", and many would add her big mouth, Steel was an atypical brash New York Jew, a marketing merchant who applied a hard-sell technique to the movie business. Neither agent nor movie boss, nor graduate of any East Coast business school, Steel rose to the top of a particularly slippery pole, as a female executive in a resolutely man's world, and helped, inadvertently, to free up top industry positions to women. Her roll call of films - love 'em or loathe 'em - defined the look of the New Hollywood, every inch as vulgar as the old, albeit lacking the former's sense of taste and genuine style, and in so doing created the populist culture of incoming generations, also by the by generating an awful lot to Weight Loss During Sex. Such of hard cash for an everinflationary industry.

Steel was born in 1946 on place. Manhattan's Upper West Side, the daughter of secondgeneration Jewish immigrants who met at a dance at 92nd Street Y. The family name was, friend, a junior production exironically, Spielberg, but her father was a muscleman bodybuilder who called himself Nat Steel, and it became the family moniker. Her father's even-movies. For Steel's part, she had tual breakdown led to a troubled and impoverished childhood, and she worked succeed, and her personal taste her way through both Boston inclined to Doctor Zhivago and and New York Universities, studying marketing at the latter's School of Commerce, In the cynical words of the Los working as a bookkeeper in the

Steel never finished her schooling and in 1968 began full-time employment, deter- Hollywood as anything else." mined not to be a mere receptionist or secretary in an era was as swift as it was unprewhen women were fighting for dictable. The Paramount film, Steel put on a spectacular

force. She fetched up at Stadia Publishing in New York, sent to cover a Giants football game at Yankee Stadium, garnering a place for berself in her own press box on behalf of the National Football League Digest knowing nothing about football and commentating on the costumes that the Vikings were wearing: it was a stop-atnothing approach that would serve her well in Hollywood.

Steel worked for Penthouse magazine as merchandiser. placing Penthouse logos everywhere, aping Playboy, and trawled the world searching for apt products. In Frankfurt she secured the rights to a handknitted item that she successfully marketed as a Cock Sock: her next big success, in tandem with her first husband Ronnie Rothstein, was the wholesale sale of Dutch bulbs, marketing amaryllis as "Penis Plants" with the slogan "Grow Your Own Penis - all it takes is \$6.98 and a lot of love".

Steel's next big success outlasted her marriage: toilet paper embossed with a symbol suspiciously similar to the interlocked "G" of Gucci. Gucci sued, but Steel continued to produce designer toilet paper, utilising such items as The Book of Lists and The Dieter's Guide shameless marketing triumphs could only end her up in one

Her marriage over, her only ambition to open a gift store in Greenwich Village, Steel was invited out to Los Angeles by a ecutive at Paramount, who realised that if Steel could market Penis Plants and Designer Toilet Paper, she was ready for been inspired by the 1976 film Rocky, a movie about the will to The Godfather, but she had no filmic consciousness to speak of. Angeles Times columnist Jack Mathews: "Marketing designer toilet paper seems as good a background for success in

Steel's move on Hollywood



Steel: 'Hell on heels' or the American career woman par excellence

hired Steel immediately after she related to him her life story to date ("It's a television series like Rhoda." Eisner is alleged to have said - "the Dawn Steel story starring Penny Marshall"), and put her on to marketing Mork and Mindy merchandise. Given Star Trek -The Movie to market, and denied access to the unfinished equal position in the work- powerbroker Michael Eisner show utilising the whole Enter-

stage via lasers, and successfully ended up with Klingons promoting McDonald's and Coca-Cola. Eisner was so impressed he immediately promoted Steel to Vice-President of Feature Production, and so, quite liter-

Despite the myth, Steel wasn't quite the first woman to heels", for instance, or the run production. By 1980 Sher- "Queen of Mean".

(later "whiz-king" at Disney) prise cast, which was beamed on in Lansing was already Presito the main Paramount theatre dent of 20th Century-Fox, and both Zoctrope and United Artists had female executives. But Steel's own personal publicity was considerable, and her rise undeniably swift, and by 1983 she had become Senior Vice-President, Production, at ally, a Hollywood legend was Paramount, her position proceeded by her reputation and a variety of nicknames: "Hell on

"Abrasive" would be too mild a word for a woman who changed secretaries on a monthly basis, but the style suited her immediate boss, the equally abrasive Don Simpson. Under Simpson, Steel found and produced Flashdance (1983) - a trite, novelette-ish fantasy flick she parlayed through three writers (with one of whom, Tom Hedley, she had a torrid affair) into a fastmoving, energetic, identifiable smash hit. It cost \$7m and took \$90m domestic, and began the now-common device of marketing theatrical features via pop promos on MTV. Steel followed Flashdance with a virtual clone. Footloose (1984). an equally artless smash hit. Steel's star was on the rise,

as was her image. She was becoming perceived as the American career woman par excellence. In 1983 she met and embarked on a long and torrid romance with the director Martin Scorsese, and learnt about the cinema. It was Scorsese who urged Steel to turn a current news story into a movie and the result was The Accused (1988), which won an Academy Award for Jodie Foster. It was also Scorsese who introduced Steel to another aspect of film culture: Steel loved to relate how, prior to playing Trivial Pursuit with Scorsese, Steven Spielherg and Ingmar Bergman, no less, she stayed up the night before memorising the cards.

Steel's formidable presence was responsible for a slew of popular successes at Paramount: she continued working with the Flashdance director Adrian Lyne on the box-office success Fatal Attraction (1987). forging a working relationship with that film's star, Michael Douglas, and immensely aided the success of the action movie Top Gun (1986) by astutely suggesting that, since the star Tom Cruise was the film's main attraction, all flying masks be dropped from the character's faces as often as possible, and where such masks were absolutely necessary, the character's name was to be written on their helmets. Realistic? Who cares - in marketing terms a major triumph.

But Steel's personal publicity was making enemies at cor-

porate Paramount, and while actually greeting her new husband, Chuck Roven, after the birth in 1989 of her baby Rebecca, she learnt from a headline in Variety in Roven's pocket that she was no longer President of Production at the studio.

However, the head of Columbia, David Puttnam, had managed in his all-too-brief tenure to upset, offend, and generally rile agents and management at Paramount's sister studio, and the Columbia powerbrokers Ray Stark, Victor Kaufman and Herbert Allen offered the prime position to Steel. In her candid and admonitory 1993 autobiography They Can Kill You But They Can't Eat You Dawn Steel states that it was the call of her life, the proverbial offer she couldn't refuse, and on 28 October 1987 Dawn Steel became President of Columbia Pictures, effectively the first woman to head

a major Hollywood studio. The very antithesis of Puttnam, Steel had the extraordinarily difficult task of mending nets, bringing back into the Columbia field movies that Puttnam had no interest in: films like Ghostbusters II and The Karate Kid III (both 1989). Steel is on record as saying that David Puttnam thought these sequels were just crass and commercial movies. "To us, they were unmined gems."

Also at Columbia, Steel restored David Leau's epic Lawrence of Arabia and turned the 1962 film into a successful 1989 re-release, on the advice of her former lover Martin Scorsese. The nine-Oscar winnet The Last Emperor (1987) also, as Steel put it, fell into her lap. Steel's Columbia regime began to reek of prestige product and box-office hits: The Adventures of Baron Munchhausen (1989), Postcards From the Edge (1990), When Harry Met Sally (1989), plus Look Who's Talking (1989) and its two

Many of the Puttnaminstigated titles were tried, and failed, and left a crippling legacy of celluloid. Columbia became ripe for takeover. On 25 September 1989 Victor Kaufman called Dawn Steel at 7am and announced that the company had been sold to Sony, and

by 1991 Steel had settled her contract at Columbia, leaving Flatiners and Awakenings (both a 1990) as her last two movies there.

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Invited by Michael Eisner. who had first started ber in the business, to join him at Disney.
Steel didn't hesitate, and final. ly achieved that which was denied her previously, no title, plus her name on the credits of her own movies. (Traditionally, Hol. lywood studio executives take no credit on their own films.) Her first self-produced film was Disney's most successful at 1993 release Cool Runnings. with a world-wide theatrical gross take of over \$140m, and her own outfit, Steel Pictures also produced Honey I Blew Up 1 the Kid (1992) and Sister Act 2 4 Back in the Habit (1993), both 1 tremendously successful.

It was a matter of time before Dawn Steel was courted by the mogul of moguls, Ted Turner, but Steel demanded complete autonomy before. accepting Turner's offer as a Chairman and Chief Executive, and negotiations collapsed only to re-surface in 1994 when, as Atlas Entertainment (named for her father Nat Steek, who performed as "Mr Atlas"), she and struck a first-look, multi-year production agreement with Turner Pictures, a 10-feature slate jointly funded by Buitain's... BBC, France's TFL, and Germany's TeleMunchen.

But rumours started to circulate in Los Angeles about Steel's health, and the family issued a wish for personal respect 3 on behalf of the press; such was: 9 Steel's standing in the Hollywood community, this wish was observed. Although she had been heavily active with 12 Monkeys (1995) and Angus (also 1995), the New York Post broke the silence in 1996 with the news that Dawn Steel had an: 1 inoperable brain tumour.

Steel dealt with the revelation by immediately hiring the director Gregory Hoblit to helm her new Denzel Washingtonstarrer, Fallen, which, with City of Angels, starring Meg Ryan and Nicolas Cage, will premiere in early 1998. Hollvwood's First Lady, Dawn Steel, will not be around to see them

— Torty Sloman

Professor R. V. Jones

evitably concentrated on his outstanding contribution to winning the war. I write as one facts at your disposal." of the thousands of students who were taught by him, writes Roger Lindsay.

"R.V." 's first-year Natural Philosophy course at Aberdeen taken by all Science, Engineering and medical students was the most wonderful mindopening experience. It is the part, above all, of my degree course that I have had cause to recall; rarely for facts and always was central to all he did. Early

M. R. D. Foot's obituary of on he emphasised to us "Oc-R. V. Jones [19 December] in- cam's Razor", which, simply stated, says: "Accept the simplest explanation that fits all the

Whilst the science was rigorous, the lectures were FUN and many of them memorable for the way in which the practical demonstration lifted any clouds of misunderstanding and seared the principle on to the brain. Like the experiment to measure the speed of a bullet for which in front of an astonished audience he drew a service revolver from the folds of for approach. Intellectual rigour his gown and drilled the two rotating discs at the other end of

the bench. The gunshot and the applause were deafening. A full first-year turn-out of

perhaps 200 students could be quite high-spirited. On one occasion a cornet began to be blown sporadically and tunelessly at the back of the theatre. Eventually and a little grittily. R.V. called the cornet-holder to descend to the front and then confiscated the instrument but not before giving us a solo that would have done Louis Armstrong proud.

Another measure of his range, humour, concern for lucidity of thought and understanding of scientific principle came in his exam questions. For sidewinder would make an exexample, "If action and reaction are equal and opposite" (an oftstated principle in physics). "how does a horse pull a cart?" Or, "If you have studied past Physics exam papers and observed any trends in the types of questions, state what the trend was, then set your own question and answer it."

In 1979, after watching a natural history television film of a sidewinder snake moving speedily across a desert at right angles to the direction pointed by its head. I thought to write to R.V. suggesting that explaining the movement of the

cellent exam question. But I should have known! After kindly thanking me for my suggestion and clearly explaining in a few words what we both had seen on television and I had not understood, he revealed that he had anticipated my thought by some 30 years.

In 1949 he had set the following question:

"There are three things which are too wonderful for me, yea, four which I The way of an eagle in the air, the way of a serpent upon a rock; the way of a ship in the midst of the sea; and the way of a man with a maid"

Proverts xxx.18-19

What explanation would you give to Solomon for any three of the

As a good Intelligence Officer, R. V. Jones stood by Occam's Razor, writes A. B. Sainsbury. He also perceived the truth of another law, defined by his colleague John Crow - "Do not believe what you wish to believe until you perceive what you ought to have perceived."

And then - and here whimsicality took over - he adumbrated Crabtree's Bludgeon, a fearful blunting of Occam's Razor: "No set of mutually in-

tellect cannot conceive a coherent explanation, however complicated." In which case, he observed, all the Intelligence Officers can do is to stand by Occam. But Crabtree? Unmentioned by obituarists so far, he was Jones's greatest spoof, though his genesis was shared with a number of contemporaries, including a distinguished Professor of German and a subsequent Public Orator of London University.

ist for which some human in-

He and his cronies at the Athenaeum created a fictitious character, 44 Christmases ago, consistent observations can ex- as a joke on the literary frater-

would be honest enough to acknowledge that they had never heard of him. He is still commemorated by the annual Crabtree Oration, and it was for this some years ago that Jones 1 mused on

nity to see how many of them

the human tendency to seek complicated explanations that I have often seen in intelligence committees and elsewhere. It almost became neoessary in Crabtree's case because, although we early orators took great care never to have Crabtree in two places at the same time, subsequent orators sometimes threw such caution to the winds

- which led to some bludgeon-

BIRTHS, **MARRIAGES** & DEATHS

DEATHS

IRVINE: Elizabeth (Betty), former Senior Psychiatric Social Worker at the Tavistock Clinic and Reader in Social Work at the University of York, died peacefully in Highgate after a short illness on 21 December, aged 91. Much-lowed mother of Chris, and grandmother of Ben, Joaly, Alexia and Louise. Funeral at Golders Green Crematorium on 27 December at Crematorium on 27 December at 11am. Friends welcome, donations if desired to Oxfam.

IN MEMORIAM PARIKIAN: In loving memory of Manoug Parikian, who died on Christ-mas Eve 1987.

MARRIAGES & DEATHS (Births, rial services, Wedding anniversaries, in Hernorism) should be sent in writing to the Gazette Editor, The Indepen-dent, I Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London EM 5DL, telephoned to 0771-293 2012 (24-hour answering machine 0171-293 2011) or faxed to 0171-293 2010, and are charged at £6.50 a line (VAT extra). OTHER Gazette announcements (notices, functions, Forthcoming marriages, Marriages) must be submitted in writing and are charged at (10 a line, VAT extra. Please include

The OBITUARIES e-mail address i

Changing of the Guard
CHRISTMAS EVE: The Household Chairy
Mounted Regiment mounts the Outer's Life
Guard at Horse Guards, Ham, is Battahou The
Royal Regiment of Wales mounts the Queen's
Guard, at Beachingham Palace, 117 Mam, band
provided by the Coldstream Guards, CHRISTMAS DANY The Household Toward Mounter Re-

Birthdays

CHRISTMAS EVE: Mr Alistair Baillie, former diplomat, 65; Mrs Mair Barnes, former managing di-rector, Woolworths, 53; Mr John Bar-ron. actor, 77; Professor Anthony Clare, psychiatrist, 55; Sir Colin Cowdrey, former cricketer, 65; Sir Garald Elliot, former chairman Gerald Elliot, former chairman, Christian Salvesen, 74; Mr Jeremy Hindley, horse-racing trainer, 54; Sir James Hodge, ambassador to Thai-land, 55; Ms Helen Jones MP, 43; Dame Joan Kelleher, former Director. WRAC, 82; Sir Ivan Lawrence QC, former MP, 61: Dr John Marek MP. 57; Miss Suzy Menkes, fashion editor, International Herald Tribune, 54; Miss Thea Porter, fashion designer, 70; Mr Norman Rossington, actor, 69; Mr John D. Taylor MP, 60; Miss Carol Vorderman, broadcaster and writer, 37; Mr Philip Ziegler, au-

thor and editor, 68. CHRISTMAS DAY: Princess Alexandra, 61; Princess Alice, Duckess of Gloucester, 96; Lord Annan, author, 81: Miss Sheila Browne, former Principal, Newnham College, Cambridge, 75; Professor Sir Kenneth Calman, chief medical officer, Department of Health, 56; Mr Quentin Crisp, writer and performer, 89; Mr Edward Davey MP, 32; Ms Barbara Follett MP, 55; Professor Christopher Frayling, Rector and Vice-Provost, Royal College of Art. 51; Lord Grade, chairman, the Grade Company, 91; The Right Rev Noel Jones, Bishop of Sodor and Man, 65; Miss Annie Lennox, singer, 43; Professor Philip Love. Vice-Chancellor, Liverpool University, 58; Mr Tony Martin, singer and actor, 84: Sir Peter Matthews, former Chief Constable of Surrey, 80; Mr Ismail Merchant,

film producer, 61; Professor Phylli-

da Parsloe, former Warden of Wills

Hall, Bristol University, 67; Mr

Lawrie Quinn MP, 41; Mr Noel

Redding, rock musician, 52: Mr John

Sharman, former High Commissioner to the Seychelles, 60; Lord Sheppard of Didgemere, former chairman, Grand Metropolitan, 65; Miss Sissy Spacek, actress. 48: Mr Nigel Starmer-Smith, sports com-mentator, 53; Sir Noel Stockdale, life president of the Asda group, 77; Mr Stephen Twigg MP, 31; The Right Rev Benjamin Vaughan, former Bishop of Swansea and Brecon, 80; Sir Christopher Wates, chief executive of Wates Building Group, 58.

Anniversaries

CHRISTMAS EVE: Births: Matthew Arnold, poet and critic. 1822: Howard Robard Hughes, mil-lionaire and recluse, 1905. Deaths: William Makepeace Thackeray, novelist, 1863: Frank Richards (Charles Harold St John Hamilton), creator Verdi's Aidu was first performed. Cairo 1871; Ahmed ben Zogu (later King Zog) overthrew the Albanian government and proclaimed a republic, 1924. Today is Christmas Eve and the Feast Day of St Adela. St Delphinus, St Gregory of Spole-to, St Irmina, St Sharbel Makhlouf and Saints Tharsilla and Emiliana.

CHRISTMAS DAY: Births: Sir Isaac Newton, mathematician, physicist and astronomer, 1642, Humphrey DeForest Bogart, actor, 1899. Deaths: W.C. Fields (William Claude Dukenfield), comedian, 1946: Sir Charles Spencer Chaplin, come-dian, 1977; Nicolae Ceausescu, former Romanian president, executed by firing squad 1989. On this day: William I. "the Conqueror", was crowned in Westminster Abbey. 1066: President Mikhail Gorbaches resigned and the Soviet Union was officially dishanded, 1991. Tomorrow is Christmas Day and the Feast Day of St Alburga, St Anastasia of Sirmium. St Eugenia and the Mar-

MEANINGS OF CHRISTMAS

What happened to the cattle by the manger?

Ox and ass looked on as Jesus was born in their stable. Or so myth has it. Yet Christianity has consistently sidelined the rights of animals. In the first of our Christmas series, The Rev Professor Andrew Linzey turns to the Pseudo-Gospels and Apocrypha to explain how.

On Christmas Eve, according to Thomas Hardy, "the meek mild creatures knelt before the crib". But the canonical gospels - Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John - do not depict the animals kneeling in the stable; in fact there are no references at all to animals attending Christ's birth.

Where then does this familiar story come from? The source appears to be the Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew, a compilation in Latin dating from the eighth or ninth centuries. This non-canonical source probably draws on an older oral tradition. The ox and the ass, for example, appear on sarcophagi of the fourth and fifth centuries and on ivory carvings of the fifth and sixth centuries.

To many the significance of this tradition, if it has one, is rather opaque. But this story does not stand alone in ancient,

Gospel of Thomas (fifth century), Jesus revives a dead fish and moulds sparrows from clay. In the Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew, the child Jesus makes peace with dragons in a cave, and lions and punthers accompany the Holy Family to Egypt. Most remarkably, Jesus encounters a family of lions who worship him, provoking the comment to bystanders that "the beasts are better than you, seeing that they recognise their Lord and glorify him".

In one Coptic fragment of unknown antiquity. Jesus encounters a man beating a mule, heals it, and admonishes the owner with these words: "Now go on and heat it no more, that you also may find mercy." Indeed in the Acts of Paul (end of second century), Paul is made to fight with a lion who turns out to be a peaceful convert to the new faith,

Of course these stories strain credulity, though in some cases only as much as their canonical counterparts. But they do not come from nowhere. They pick-up animal-friendly hints found, for example, in Mark i,13 that Jesus began his ministry in the wilderness "with the wild beasts", his triumphal entry to Jerusalem on a "humble ass" (Matthew sxi.1-9), and not least of all his saying about sparrows

claimed as the "Lamb of God". The significance of these gospel hints and apocryphal traditions concerns Christ's identification with the animal world. Christ's birth and ministry are understood as a harbinger of peaceful creaturely relations in fulfilment of Isaiah's prophecy that the "wolf shall live with the sheep . . . and a little child shall lead them" (xi,6). God's kingdom then consists in peaceable, filial,

co-operative relations between species. Theology has been the poorer for Western theology remains firmly anthropocentric. Its concentration on humanity has not unjustly led philosophers to suspect that Christianity is nothing other than the deification of humankind. Feuerbach's warning is relevant here: "Religion makes God become man and only then sets up this God that has human form ... as an

object of its worship and reverence." At its worst, Christianity is idolatry the sole or exclusive concern of God the Creator, Consequently, concern for animals and their suffering is frequently regarded as marginal, even peripheral, to Christian faith.

"not forgotten by God" (Luke xii.6). In by rejecting exclusivist readings of the

incarnation. However picturesque the nativity scene now appears to us, it embodies a vision of the peaceful kingdom which Christians need to recover. The incarnation is not just about God becoming human, but about the Word becoming "flesh" - a God-given solidarity with all fleshly, sentient creatures. To put it in less theological language: a nonspecialist endorsement of the rights of all sentient beings.

Despite their poor record on animal welfare, there have been moments when Christians have seen and made not pursuing this connection. Much of the connection. The RSPCA was founded in 1824 by an Anglican priest, Arthur Broome, as an expression of Christ-like charity. That Christian crusade against cruelty effectively laid the foundation for the modern movement for animal rights.

Not insignificantly, it was Thomas Hardy who wrote "Compassion: An Ode" in celebration of the society's centenary. He maintained that "mercy" in supposing that human interests are ic and that without it "helplessness. breeds tyranny".

The Baptist preacher Charles Spurgeon once recounted the view of Rowland Hill that a person "was not a true" One way to eclipse that idolatry is ter off for it". And commented: "That

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BUSINESS & CITY EDITOR, JEREMY WARNER . NEWS DESK: 0171-293 2636 FAX: 0171-293 2098 E-MAIL: INDYBUSINESS@INDEPENDENT.CO.UK FINANCIAL JOURNAL OF THE YEAR

South Korean won hits record low as market dives again

The financial crisis in South Korea deepened further yesterday as the won hit a record low and the stock market took a record one-day dive. Commentators now believe there is a real possibility Korea could default, as Stephen Vines reports from Hong Kong.

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Market watchers in South Korea are running out of negative adjectives to describe the slump of financial markets now under way in the world's eleventh largest economy.

Yesterday the Korean won hurtled down in value by almost 15 per cent, yet another record low, taking the currency to almost half is value in the space of weeks. Meanwhile, the stock market fell by almost 7 per cent, its steepest one-day plunge ever.

It seems that not only are market watchers left groping for words, the President elect Kim Dae-jung said yesterday that he could not "sleep since I was briefed [about the financial situation] I am totally flabbergasted". Mr.Kim, who is no stranger to hyperbole, also said the whole country could be bankrupted in a month or "even one day".

Last night, however, aides to the president-elect moved to play down his comments, made in a Korean newspaper. "The president-elect did not mean there was a real-possibility of a national bankruptcy; but wanted to express his willingness to undertake restructuring," said a spokesperson.

Yesterday Standard & Poor's (S&P) followed Moody in knocking down Korean sovereign debt, corporate and bank ratings to junk bond levels.

"The lowering of Korea's foreign currency ratings out of investment-grade reflects the agency's view that recent steps taken by the government are inconsistent with the spirit of the International Monetary Fund's rescue programme," the agency

The warnings from the credit agencies spread fears that South Korea would start defaulting on its debts. Many bankers in Seoul believe that some \$20bn is due for repayment by the end of the month. However, the Finance Ministry said yesterday that the figure was around \$14-15bn, with another \$15bn due in January.

A fresh shock was delivered to the system with news that Korea's total foreign debt stood at around \$180bn.

The IMF, however, is adamant that its loan will suffice. A spokesperson said: "The question of whether the IMF loan to Korea will be sufficient] has been asked at various levels. The answer is yes." The IMF has already despatched \$9bn of aid to Korea. The UK provision of \$1.25bn has not yet been drawn upon, and Treasury officials are thought to believe no further UK aid will be

Lee Kang-nam, assistant govemor of the Bank of Korea, provided a modicum of reassurance by stating that Korea did not face the possibility of sovereign default, given its increasing supply of usable foreign reserves and an expected inflow of funds from the IMF rescue package which would take the country's foreign reserves to \$17.5bn by the end of the

These remarks reduced the toll on the Korean won from its lowest point in the day's trading but the currency closed at 1,960 against the US dollar. Just weeks

ago a parity of 1,000 against the US dollar was considered to be as far as the won would drop. Now it looks destined to slip below the 2000 mark.

One reason for the accelerated rate of decline is that the government has lifted limits on daily fluctuations of trading in the won. It last stood at 10 per cent, but with strong urging from the IMF, this limit was

The build-up of foreign currency repayments due at the end of the month has forced companies to scramble for dollars. Meanwhile, the sharply lowered credit ratings for Korean banks and the rocketing of interest rates mean that even if it proves possible to roll over debt repayment in the short term, these debts will be far harder to pay off in the longer term.

Such is the unease in Korea's financial markets that it brought the debt market grinding to an absolute halt yesterday.

Meanwhile, the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions, Korea's largest union grouping, threatened an "all-out struggle" of industrial action to prevent the lavoffs which will inevitably result from the tight fiscal measures imposed by the IMF.

The unions had thought that Mr Kim would prove an ally in resisting redundancies because he has a long history of supporting labour struggles. However, he is reported to have told American officials that he saw layoffs as "inevitable" if wage cuts were not enough to prevent corporate bankruptcies.

The contagion from Korea wept across other Asian currency markets yesterday, striking with particular vengeance in Malaysia. Japanese markets were closed for a holiday yesterday.



An elderly South Korean man watching a trading board as stocks plunge in Seoul yesterday. Comments by Kim Dae-jung, the president-elect, that he was 'flabbergasted' by the seriousness of the country's crisis added to Seoul's sense of impending financial doom

Far East investors' money devalues by one-third

Tens of thousands of investors who put money in Far East unit trusts have lost more than onethird of their value in the six months since Asia's economic crisis began.

As Andrew Verity reports, investors have withdrawn another £I bn, leaving around £5bn invested.

An investor who put £1,000 into a Par East unit trust 18 months ago would now have investments worth less than £600 on average, according to the most recent figures on fund managers' performance. That compares with £924 just six months ago.

Investing £1,000 in the worst performing fund, Fidelity's Asean fund, would lead to a value now of less than £390, according to MoneyFacts, a performance measuring specialist.

Of funds investing in the Far East, but not Japan, even the best performers have seen devastating losses. In the same example, £1,000 with another Fidelity fund, South-east Asia, would now be worth less than £740.

Fund Research, an arm of Standard and Poor's which tracks the performance of unit trusts, said in a statement to clients: "It has been a market for brave investors only. None of the Asian markets has provided the sterling investor with a positive return over 12 **Far East funds** What £1,000 invested in Asia 18 months ago is worth

Foo three funds Fidelity South-east Asia Stewart Ivory Asia Pacific Edinburgh Pacific Bottom three lands Dresdner RCM Asian Growth 475 Lazard Pacific Growth -

months, losses ranging from 1.6 per cent in Taiwan to 70.3 per cent in Thailand."

Paradoxically, conserva-

HSBC's index fund have order to limit exposure to further stock market falls. been hit hardest because they Martin Harrison, managhave avoided speculative ing director of Global Asset "red chip" stocks in Hong

Kong and stuck with blue Management, said: "We now have more than 20 per cent of chip investments. our fund in cash and two thirds Pat Cunningham, a Far East expert at Edinburgh Fund of our money in Hong Kong. Managers, said: "The crisis in The rest is in Singapore. There's almost nothing in Thaithe Thai baht was only the tip of the iceberg. Companies had land, Korea, Indonesia or geared up with what they Malaysia. By the beginning of the year we will be looking for thought was cheap foreign debt, thinking that growth bargains; very often there's a would go on forever and a day. sharp spike upwards after such When their currencies devala downturn.

ued, the foreign debt exploded Fidelity said its Asean fund their balance sheets." had performed badly because of a brief to invest in all South-east Fund managers are being Asian countries except Hong forced to sell hundreds of millions of pounds in shares to Kong; its South-east Asia fund meet withdrawals and double had poured money into the tively managed trusts such as the amount they hold in cash in former colony.

Cinven's successes pave way for private hospital giant in UK

Cinven, the venture capitalist group, is poised to announce the creation of the biggest private hospital group in Britain with the merger of BMI and Amicus Healthcare, two of the many companies in which it has invested heavily. Andrew Yates charts the progress of Cinven and discovers the secret to its success.

Cinven specialises in throwing money behind some of British industry's best management teams. Founded in 1977 as the venture capitalist arm of the Coal Board, it was freed from the shackles of the nationalised institution two years ago when it was bought out by its own management team. Since then Cinven has expanded rapidly to become one of the biggest venture capitalist groups in the UK. Having raised a £1bn venture capital fund last year it is currently raising another £1.5bn to spend on new ventures.

Unlike some other venture capitalists which are seeking a quick buck from their investment, Cinven has a policy of investing in companies for the long term, typically three to five years.

John Brown, Cinven's deputy managing director, said yesterday: "One thing that distinguishes us from our competitors is that we are independent and not owned by a financial services group. Our strategy is to put capital expenditure into companies ... which have often been starved of investment, to help them grow. Our philosophy makes us welcome to many management teams."

of Zurich Financial Services group (ZFS) the

£22bn financial services giant to be formed by

merging BAT's financial services businesses Ea-

gle Star and Allied Dunbar, Threadneedle As-

set Management and Farmers, the US-based

insurer with Swiss-based Zurich Insurance, not

the 45 per cent stated when the merger was

first amounced in October. The adjustment

reflects the improvement in Zurich's anticipated

earnings since that date, a joint statement from

"We believe these definitive terms offer ex-

the two companies said yesterday.

BAT investors take smaller stake in giant

BAT shareholders will have only 43 per cent cellent value for shareholders," BAT industries

Cinven has capitalised on the huge growth in the management buy out and buy in markets, orchestrating £4.9bn worth of deals since 1990 including the £372m management buy out of Dunlop Slazenger from BTR and the £402m

deal to spin off Gardner Merchant from Forte. "There is pressure on large companies to divest of non-core businesses by sales or demergers and that trend will continue. Our rate of return has outperformed the stock market over the last 20 years and we aim to continue that performance." Mr Brown said.

Cinven confirmed yesterday that merger talks between BMI and Amicus Healthcare had reached the advanced stages and a deal was likely to be announced early in the new year. The new group will be the country's biggest private hospital owner, pushing Bupa into second place. It will control 41 hospitals with more than 2,500 beds.

Cinven owns a large stake in both companies and has been instrumental in creating the merger. It bought a majority stake in BMI in July as part of a £1.1bn acquisition from Générale des Eaux, the French utility. The deal was the largest European management buy out this decade. It also backed a £200m management buy out of Amicus in December 1995 when it was spun off from Compass, the caterer.

Analysts believe the merger could create a company valued at well over £1bn. The new group is likely to be floated on the stock market within a few years.

Charles Auld, who currently heads BMI, will become chairman of the new group, however most of the senior management will be made up of Amicus personnel according to industry sources. Analysts rate the Amicus management as some of the best in industry.

chairman, Lord Cairns said. Other details in-

cluding the arrangements for joint control re-

main the same. The deal is subject to regulatory

consent and shareholder approval and is not

likely to become final until the second half of

1998, but the terms are now binding and will

not be subject to further adjustment. ZFS will

be one of the largest insurance and asset man-

agement groups in the world with gross pre-

mium income of \$40bn, assets under

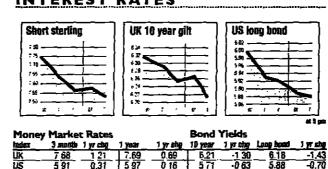
management of \$342bn and 68,000 employees.

BAT shares fell 7.5p to 533.5p yesierday.

STOCK MARKETS

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F7SE 350	2428.30	12.80	0.53	2570.50	2013,40	3.4
FTSE All Share	2371.69	11.59	0.49	2507.68	1989.78	3.49
FTSE SmallCap	2291.30	-1.00	-0.04	2407.40	2158.00	3.3
FTSE Fledgling	1247.90	170	0.14	1346,50	1213.60	3.3

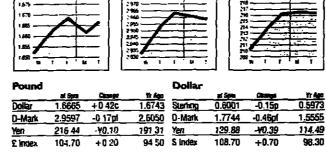
INTEREST RATES



MAIN PRICE CHANGES

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Orange	264 00	14.00	5 60	Wimpey	98,00	-5.00	-5.7
Blue Circle	332.00	17.00	5 40	PrzzaExpress	736,50	-29.50	-3.8

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Knickerbox shops hit crisis at Christmas

The slowdown in consumer spending in the run-up to Christmas claimed its first corporate victim yesterday when Knickerbox, the lingerie retailer, called in the administrators. The company blamed poor trading in the last few weeks before Christmas which had caused a cash-flow crisis. Nigel Cope, City

Correspondent, reports on an

unseasonal high-street malaise.

Buchler Philips have been appointed administrators at Knickerbox which will continue to trade normally from its 27 branches on high streets and railway stations. Simon Freakley, at Buchler Philips said he was confident that a buyer could be found and that several expressions of interest had already been received.

"Fundamentally we have a strong brand in a well established niche that has potential in its marketplace."

Knickerbox was launched in 1986 by two former Marks & Spencer employees, Janie Godber and Stephen Schaffer. It recorded sales of £13m last year.

Gieves Group, the 200 year-old Savile Road tailor bought a 49.5 per cent stake in February last year. Gieves shares have been dented by Knickerbox's poor performance and fell a further 1.5p to 36p, a new 12-month low. They stood at 82p last year.

Knickerbox experienced a poor Christmas last year and announced a £2.7m management restructuring-structuring. Buchler Phillips said the management had been doing the right things such as upgrading the stores but had been caught out by poor consumer spending. The directors applied for the administration order themselves.

The collapse of Knickerbox is the most serious evidence yet that this Christmas has not lived up to retailers' high expectations. It follows profits warnings from Oasis Stores and Mulberry and an economic survey suggesting the January sales will offer shoppers record bargains because shops have over-stocked.

Retail experts have blamed the slowdown on higher interest rates, increased taxes and the evaporation of the building society windfall money. However, John Lewis Partnership yesterday said that though trading had come very late, its targets should be met. Brendan O'Callaghan, director of trading at John Lewis' department stores said: "It looks promising but it will go right to the wire. We will need to trade strongly until close of business today. He said traditional gift items such as perfumes, books and fashion had done well. Electrical goods had not performed so strongly.

John Lewis' department stores sales had been running 4 per cent up on the previous year against a cumulative increase of 7 per cent. Mr O'Callaghan said a good final week should push the average December figure to a 6 per

Sears takes further step out of troubled shoe retailing

further step in the withdrawal from its lossmaking footwear business with the sale of 44 Shoe City branches for a net loss of £16m. The remaining 39 stores which are all large out of town warehouse style outlets, are expected to close with the loss of 650 jobs. Shoe City is thought to have recorded losses of £5m last year · on sales or around £60m.

The stores are being sold for £6m to Brantano, Belgium's second largest shoe retailer which is making its first foray into the UK market. Following the recent sales of Dolcis and Shoe Express, Sears now has only the 25 profitable Cable & Co stores to sell. A deal is expected by the end of next month.

So far the break-up and sale of Sears' lossmaking British Shoe Corporation has involved around 4,000 job losses. A further 650 jobs are at risk at British Shoe's headquarters

Sears, the troubled retail group, has taken a and distribution centre in Braunstone, Leicestershire. The net costs of the retrenchment programme to Sears has been £115m, slightly less than the £150m expected. Around 300 shops have closed in the Shoe Express Shoe City and concessions businesses.

It is a remarkable demise for a business that until recently controlled 2,000 shoe shops in Britain and was responsible for one in five of every pair of shoes sold. Sears will now concentrate on the de-merg-

er of its Selfridges department store business which should take place next summer. Freemans, the mail order business whose sale to Littlewoods was blocked by the competition authorities, is also expected to be spun-off in 2-3 years. The return of around £80m to shareholders is also expected, though no decision has been taken on the timing.

- Nigel Cope

Bid hopes dial up Vodafone shares



Vodafone dialled the festive its control of the Cellnet ing and more distress in Korca. 25p up at 910p (after 924p), itage but there is a persistent shares climbed to a 450.5p high

Merrill Lynch and HSBC potential candidates. provided the investment the take over thoughts with the likes of American giant AT&T

group has climbed from a from 16.1 per cent. 240p low this year. Its performance has been due in part to its increasing subscriber base both at home and overseas

Takeover hopes, however, have been a big inspiration. In the global telephone scene Vodafone looks one of the

number. Helped by a round of network, would stand little, if share tips and the inevitable any, chance of clearing stories of a US strike the monopoly hurdles. But an overseas group could succeed with a 12.5p gain. Trading was and if AT&T stays at home there remains a host of

Vodafone also contributed nudge. US buying rekindled to its pre-Christmas cheer by declaring it had finalised lifting its stake in Française du Radiotelephone, the French The mobile telephone mobile network, to 20 per cent

Orange, however, pipped Voders to the top of the blue chip leader board. It gained 14p to 264p although the adwhich, it is generally agreed, vance looked unrepresentaensures strong medium term tive, no doubt the result of order driven trading.

The rest of the market was back in winning festive ways with Footsie scoring a 31.6 points gain to 5,049.8, despite most enticing prizes. BT, with an uncertain New York open-

A \$12bn take over spree in the US helped sentiment

Another Footsic change gave tracker funds something to think about. Only a couple and elbow room to continue its of days after being relegated retail build-up. Blue Circle Industries was reinstated. Its swift return was due to Mercury Asset Management's departure as Merrill Lynch's bid for the fund manager went unconditional. thereby cutting its Footsic re-

turn to just two days.

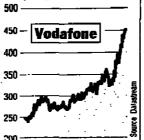
Galen, the little known Ulster drugs group, replaced BCI in the FTSE 250 index. The company came to market at 150p a share in July. It was then valued at £181.9m. With its shares at 324.5p the capitalisation has increased to £393.5m.

Whitbread, the leisure group, was another to stretch to a new high. The shares closed

be contemplating two big disposals to give it ammunition

One story is new chief executive David Thomas is considering retreating from the beerage. The group has always strongly defended its beer her-

Share spotlight share price, pence



They were 695p in November. rumour Mr Thomas, who suc-The group is rumoured to ceeded Peter Jarvis earlier this year, feels there is little point in Whithread remaining the fourth force in a declining market.

The other possible disposal said to be occupying Mr Thomas is the Thresher's offlicence chain which has been hit by supermarkets and bootleggers. Parisa, the venture capitalist backed arrival on the drink shops scene, is thought to be interested.

Financial shares, on renewed hopes of corporate action, were given another whirl. Lloyds TSB to go for Abbey National was the latest variation of a well worn theme. Helped by the sale of a loan business Lloyds gained 25p to 761p. Abbey put on 41p to 1,069 (after 1,080p)

Sun Life & Provincial improved 22p to 440p as the TAKING STOCK

French giant AXA-UAP cut its

stake, as promised, to 71.6 per

cent selling 6 million shares.

Henderson Crosthwaite rate

the shares a buy, suggesting

profits of £285m this year will

grow to £530m by 2,001. Racal

Electronic held at 258p with

Salomon Smith Barney joining

Ionica, the under pressure

telephone group, recovered a

further 9p to 96.5p, encouraged

by director buying at 84p.

Aegis, the media buyer, was

firm at 67p with Seaq turnover

edible oil group, slumped 26p

to 259p after a 25 per cent prof-

its fall. Reflec, a reflective inks

group, was the day's worst

performer, losing nearly 70

per cent to 9.5p following an-

other profit warning. The

The Independent Teleshare - Tel. 0891 - 201 200

shares once touched 126.5p.

(TIS pic, Landon ECZA 4P<u>1</u>).

Seaq volume: 632.7m trades 37,876

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Acatos & Hutcheson, the

approaching 10 million.

the buy chorus.

Rolls-Royce firmed to 228p.

Optoplast, supplying optical and sunglass cases and a range of jewellery boxes, made a successful debut. Placed at 128p by stockbroker Williams de Broe the shares went to 142p. The company is thought to have 50 per cent of the optical case market, selling to the five big optician chains.

Langdons Foods, the struggling tea and coffee group, held at 1.75p as non executive. director Stephen Barclay sold his 4.2m shares at 1.75p. Last week Plantation & General sold 24m shares (11 per cent). It still has 11.5 per cent.

Bickerton, a builder and property developer, held at 40p - its March flotation price. Stockbroker Teather & Greenwood sees this year's profits rising from £232,000 to £800,000 and then hitting £1.3m.

strong point balance

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OUTLOOK ON THE CHALLENGE FACING BRITAIN'S LEADING BANKS

Europe overbanked? Pull the other one

Martin Taylor, chief executive of Barclays, has asserted in a number of recent interviews that Europe is "overbanked". This is not a concept most ordinary banking customers find easy to grasp, for despite the burgeoning number of high street banks and Mr Taylor's belief that we need less of them, banking profits are booming and most British banks are throwing off excess capital like there's no tomorrow. In these circumstances, the need would seem rather to be for more compention, not less. So what does Mr Taylor mean by over-

Plainly there's a sub text here, for Mr Taylor believes that regulators can eventually be persuaded that Barclays be allowed to merge with another sizeable British bank like Nat West. Though he acknowledges that such a merger would raise serious competition concerns in particular market segments and regions, he argues that these could be overcome through disposals. In any case, any merger of this sort should be viewed not in terms of narrow domestic market concerns, Mr Taylor believes, but in the wider European context and in particular in the light of imminent European Monetary

With monetary union comes the reality of a single European market in banking and other forms of financial service. Most companies will progressively require just one bank to deal with their European needs, not as at present a bank in each country. The same argument can be applied to retail banking. When in matters financial, Britain, Germany, France, Spain

and the rest are as one, do we really need so many banks? The dynamic of the market place, bankers like Mr Taylor argue, will force a series of mergers and takeovers among the present plethora of national banks to create a limited number of pan European super banks. Already we are seeing one attempt at this with the mooted merger of Union Bank of Switzerland and Swiss Bank Corporation.

These pressures are not confined to banking. Most chief executives of large international companies make exactly the same sort of arguments about their own industries. But because banking is all about money, the effects of European monetary union do take on a special significance when applied to this sector.

It is therefore vitally important that regulators get these decisions right when banks and other financial services organisations come hammering at their door for permission to merge. Do Mr Taylor and others like him have a point, or is this just a case of dressing up an old and fundamentally disreputable ambition in new clothing? Is not this in the end all about the businessman's natural desire to acquire the competition so as better to crunch and exploit the customer? If it is, how handy that monetary union should provide such a splendid new justification for this time honoured endeavour.

A new book on the banking industry, The Banking Revolution - Salvation or Slaughter, provides a useful insight into the commercial pressures on this industry, though it doesn't pretend to offer policy makers answers on how to deal with

the creation of European super banks. dustry consolidation. It is partly in response In these circumstances, is it not only right Written by a group of consultants from the Mitchell Madison Group, the book is about the impact of information technology on the industry and it paints what in some respects is an apocalyptic view of the future for the present market leaders.

No bank can afford not to invest in information technology, the authors point out, because it would then get left behind. The problem is that as they do so, their profits begin to drift away since their cost structures are not changing fast enough to allow them to generate sufficient re-

The effect of IT therefore is simultaneously to increase value for users of bank services while destroying the profits of the providers. Technology has made possible the provision of enhanced services at lower cost; it has enormously increased capacity while diminishing the need for labour, thereby working in favour of consumers rather than shareholders and

One of the results of this is greatly to increase the pressure for consolidation and for expansion into other areas of financial services as organisations attempt to defend present rates of return and market positions. The question for regulators is not just whether it is appropriate to allow banks the luxury or this response, but also whether present lines of regulation are sufficient to the task of customer pro-

IT has allowed the blurring of channels of distribution and product in a way that creates pressure for cross financial in-

to this process that Britain is setting up a super regulator, the Financial Services Authority, which brings together previously separate and industry specific forms of investor protection and supervision. Goverument regulation is thus already beginning to mimmick the pressures of the market place.

So is Mr Taylor right about this after all? Or to put the question more correctly. should policy makers be allowing the old established organisations of banking a special dispensation because of the way IT and the single market are transforming their industry? What the Mitchell Madison book shows is that because the cost of large scale information processing has been declining by orders of magnitude for many years now, established banks cannot help but invest in it. By doing so they are creating over-capacity and reducing the barriers to entry as technology becomes more widely accessible and reduces the scale required for low cost operation.

This in turn has encouraged a range of new entrants - supermarkets, other financial institutions like Standard Life and the Prudential, and entrepreneurs such as Richard Branson. Furthermore it has allowed smaller banks such as Royal Bank of Scotland not saddled with the cost of an extensive branch network an unprecedented opportunity to raid the customer base of larger players with new, low cost products. The book warns "the potential exists that radical innovation could undermine traditional banking and that defenders are unprepared and vulnerable". or die.

and fair that established banks be allowed to merge?

The arguments might seem finely balanced, but in the end the answer has to be no, at least for the time being. Yes Europe is "overbanked", but not in the sense that Mr Taylor means it. The overbanking is in the form of tired old established players whose response to the process of change is to reach for the nearest investment banker and begin planning to take each other over. Mr Branson doesn't believe Britain or Europe to be overbanked, and nor does Standard Life and the many others now entering the market for the first time.

There is really only one good argument for allowing big established banks in Britain to go this route. The possibility, already apparent in the Swiss banking merger, that regulators in other countries allow their national banks to consolidate would undoubtedly put players like Barclays not allowed to do the same at a serious competitive disadvantage in the single currency. However, this could easily be dealt with by applying a consistent European wide approach to mergers policy.

If established banks are allowed to consolidate their position there is a real risk that they will use their power to stifle new entrants and the process of change will at least be slowed. The customer, who for a change is beginning to get the upper hand as things stand, would lose as a result. The market should be allowed to work its ways and established players must either adapt

Strong pound takes its toll on balance of payments

The first concrete signs that the strong pound has begun to take its toll emerged yesterday, with news that the UK's trade deficit widened sharply in October and November. As Lea Paterson reports,

there are also indications that the Far Eastern crisis has begun to hurt UK firms.

The pundits who predicted

appeared to have been proved wrong yesterday. The UK's global trade deficit on goods and services rose to £0.6bn in October. This was up £0.2bn from September, and was the highest monthly deficit recorded since July 1996.

pressures of the strong pound

"The figures provide a further blow to the theory that UK firms can cope quite comfortably with the strong pound," Jonathan Loynes; at HSBC Greenwell, said.

Preliminary indications are that the November deficit will be even worse. The Office for UK firms could withstand the National Statistics estimates of HSBC James Capel.

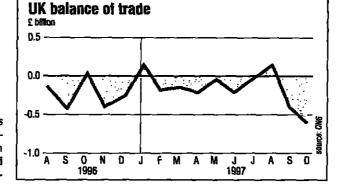
that the deficit in goods traded with non-European Union countries will be £1.1bn, up £0.2bn from October, and the highest since October 1995. "The trend in the UK trade balance is widening," the ONS said.

The market deterioration in the non-EU trade balance in November was attributed by many economists to continuing difficulties in the Far East. "Today's data suggest an Asian effect is coming through," said economists at ABN Amro. "Exports to Asia are weakening significantly as demand collapses," agreed Adam Cole

The trade deficit on goods alone widened to £1.4bn in October, reflecting a combination both of sterling's strength and a levelling off in world-wide demand.

Geoff Dicks, of NatWest Markets, said the figures provided "the first definitive sign that exports are cracking beneath the strength of sterling and/or early evidence of a slowdown in world demand".

A deterioration in the UK trade balance has been predicted by economists for some time, Indeed, many were surprised that no concrete signs of a deterioration had come December, the UK's balance of



through sooner, especially given the warnings sounded by recent surveys of manufacturers.

"The full force of the laws of gravity, long in abeyance, is now being felt," Mr Dicks said. But the UK's trade balance is, by historical standards, still remarkably healthy. Economists are predicting that, even with further deterioration in

In October, Allan Spall,

ICI's finance director said

there were £2.5bn of dispos-

als still to go with Methanol

with its gas businesses high

on the list. The stock market

has been impressed with the

speed of ICI's transformation

which some analysts

expected to take three year

to achieve.

trade will remain in surplus for the year as whole.

And although a balance of trade deficit is forecast for 1998, this is not anticipated to be as large as the shortfalls that typically accompany UK boom times. Some economists are sceptical that the figures will persuade the Bank of England to ease off on interest rate pol-

Shake-up

as Reflec

Investors in Reflec, the reflec-

tive inks group, took fright yes-

terday sending the shares

plunging nearly 70 per cent to

9.5p as it warned that sales of

new products continued to dis-

appoint and raised the spectre

of a US legal battle after one of

its products allegedly infringed

Reflec also announced a

management shake-up, after a

dreadful share price perfor-

mance angered institutional

shareholders. Harold Morley is

stepping down as non-executive

chairman, to be replaced by

Alan Edwards, a partner with

accountants Neville Russell.

Peter White, Reflec's managing

director, has been promoted to

chief executive. However, de-

spite Reflec's problems. Peter

White was unavailable to an-

swer mounting concerns about

the group's future yesterday.

having flown to America for his

pointed accountants Arthur

Anderson to assess its financial

plight and determine whether

Floated in April 1996 at

it needs to raise more funds.

40p, Reflec's shares rose to

more than 130p earlier this

year before its dramatic fall

the company's brokers and

Adam Hart, of Peel Hunt,

The new board has also ap-

Christmas holidays.

from grace.

a patent.

shares

plunge

stantial redundancies" among 900 staff. Losses ballooned from £5m to £9.5m for the year to May. Littlewoods, which owns a 29.9-per-cent stake, is providing

Jacques Vert pulls back

from brink of bankruptcy

Jacques Vert, the troubled fashion group, pulled itself back from the brink of bankruptcy yesterday after announcing new financing and a wide-ranging shake up of its business. Bob Reid, the chairman, admitted the shake-up would lead to "sub-

a £500,000 loan and Midland Bank has increased its overdraft facility to £8m. Jacques Vert is selling Grace Collection to a management buy-in team for £1.6m. But the group has been forced to close the rest of the wholesale division. Problems stem from a decision to create trendier clothing ranges designed to appeal to a younger customers. The experiment flopped and the group has introduced new ranges to cater for the more mature, affluent woman.

Reckitt on US buying spree

Reckitt & Colman, the household products group, has acquired four US household brands for £96m. They are Spray 'n Wash, Giass Plus, Vivid and Yes, bought from SC Johnson & Son, a US group. SC Johnson in turn is acquiring the brands as part of its purchase of the Dow Chemical consumer products business. Sales of the brands are estimated at £78m and are expected to record profits of £10m. Following the deal. North America will account for 36 per cent of Reckitt's

Gaming machine buy-out

European Leisure has sold its Maygay gaming-machines business to a management buy-out team led by Roy Howell, whose father founded the business in 1968, for £16.5m, 3i, the venture capitalists, are backing the management team. Maygay is the UK's second-largest gaming-machine manufacturer, with annual sales of £29m, and produced a pre-tax profit of £3m for the year to June 1997. European Leisure will concentrate on building up its bars and discotheques business.

KPMG's accent on Europe

KPMG and Ernst & Young stressed the strong European focus of their planned merger in their formal submission presented to the European competition authorities yesterday. Presentation of the document comes as Brussels sources indicated the planned deal and that between Coopers & Lybrand and Price Waterhouse would - as expected - be subjected to an investigation lasting several months.

Lloyd's broker suspended

Lloyd's has suspended Anthony Prost, former chairman of Nelson Hurst Marine Ltd, for six months, and fined him £10,000 plus Lloyd's costs of £40,000 and censured him, following findings of misconduct. The allegations against him related to the taking of a secret profit by NHML.

Tonic for Pernod-Ricard

Shares in Pernod-Ricard rose 5 per cent in Paris after it sold its Orangina drink brand to Coca-Cola for \$840m to concentrate on higher-margin spirit brands. It may now buy Dewar's whisky and Bombay Gin, brands that Guinness and Grand Met must dispose of under the terms of their merger.

Profits fall in edible oils

Edible oils processor Acatos & Hutcheson saw profits fall per cent to £5.84m in the year to 28 September on sales which slipped 2 per cent to £277m.

Farm equipment buy-in

Specialist metals group Wilshaw has sold its farm-equipment spares distribution business to a management buy-in team for £22.5m to concentrate on its powder metals division. The businesses disposed of made £3.5m last year.

disappointment. mies are high risk	COMPANY	RESUL	15		
roducts produce	·	Turnover £	Pre-tax £	EPS	Dividend
dways remain so."	Acatos & Hutcheson (F)	2.77m (282m)	5.B2m (7.66m)	9.5p (14.5p)	10.5p (10.0p)
group making an	Anglessy Misley (f)	- (-)	-0.85m (-0.42m)	-0.1p (-0.1p)	nii
ofit in the year to	Fayrewood (I)	20.3m (2.2m)	0.485m (0.103m)	2.14p (1.42p)	0.50p (0.40p)
8 but Mr Hart ad- ld not meet this tar-	Jacquez Vert (F)	44.94m (42.67m)	-9 45m (-5.04m)	-61.7p (-41.2p)	- (-)
ed to predict when	Stewart & Wright (I)	- (-)	0.233m (0.219m)	10.28p (9.40p)	nB
ik into the black. — Andrew Yates	(F) - Final (I) - Interim	† EPS is pro-excep	denais "Dividend to	be paid as a FIO	·

ICI sells explosives arm to Orica for £223m

JCI's radical re-structuring lower margin bulk chemicals an £85m profit on the deal. It construction and allied exmade further progress yesterday when it sold its explosives businesses in Europe and the Americas to the former ICI Australia, now known as Orica, for £223m. Orica, which was itself 62 per cent owned by ICI until earlier this year, said the move followed a competitive auction for the business.

The businesses form part of the original grouping of ICI's operations when the

group was formed in 1926. The move is part of a string of deals by ICI under which it is moving away from

PEOPLE &

BUSINESS

to specialise in more profitable sectors such as coatings materials and speciality

ICI paid £5bn for Unilever's speciality chemicals business earlier this year and the proceeds from recent disposals are being used to replace debt.

Yesterday's deal includes the explosive operations in Canada, Latin America and Europe and its distribution business in the United States. The division made a trading profit of \$3m last year on sales of \$46m. ICI will book

is expected to be earnings enhancing. Rob Margetts, ICI's di-

rector responsible for industrial chemicals and materials. said the deal re-united ICI's American and European explosives businesses with those of Orica. "recreating once again the global leader in the industry". It will have a sold its explosive interests in global market share of 20 per cent.

The business manufacturers and supplies a range of bulk and packaged explosive and blast management services to the mining, quarrying.

ploration industries worldwide. The business employs 27,000 people. ICI's explosive business

has manufacturing sites in Canada, Mexico, Brazil and the UK. There has been a flurry of disposals by ICI in recent weeks. Earlier this month it

Africa to Orica for \$117m. It sold its UK fertiliser operations to a US company for £200m last month. A raft of industrial chemical operations are due to be sold to Du

\$33bn.

However, the shares have lost some of their fizz. They shot from their year's low of 688p in the spring to 1108p on the back of the restructure announcement. Yesterday they edged 8.5p higher to 930p. -- Nigel Cope

markets". Racy stuff.

Prior to Credit Agricole Mr Bronk, 37, headed up the European equity team at Barings Asset Management, from 1991 to Bank of England as an analyst, Rothschild.

Office (SFO) was worth the inhabitants of Elm Street exhibit a sense of this card could have been SFO uses its controversial 'Section Two' powers to to the Inland Revenue's

Agricole Indosuez Group to join the former's European equity strategy team. The investment bank, says Mr Bronk, will "focus on the European Monetary Union and the impact the single currency is expected to have on European equity

1995. His very first job was at the followed by a stint at NM His interests are hill-walking and writing. His first book, slated for publication in mid-summer,

is called: Progress and the Invisible Hand: Philosophy and Economics of Human Advance. Sounds like a page-turner.

I thought this Christmas card from the Serious Fraud sharing. It's not often that humour. On the other hand, meant entirely seriously, as an example of the way the require witnesses to provide information. That's nothing thumbscrews, of course...

Azargh. The time for making New

Year's Resolutions is upon us once again. Will those kitchen cupboards finally be replaced?

According to IFA Promotion. the lobby group for independent financial advice, over 15 million people say they will start 1998 with a resolution. Just one in four will The lobby group also esti-

mates that nearly 7 million will make a financial resolution. IFA Promotion surveyed over

1,000 people and extrapolated the results. Amongst their conclusions is that, of those making a financial resolution, nearly half (2.76m. 11 per cent) will aim to save for a specific actor like a car or a holday, in the year ahead.

More than a quarter (27per cent) said they wanted to spend

less money, and a fifth wanted to dear outstanding debts. Other popular resolutions include changing jobs to get more money (13 per cent), investing more money (13 per cent) and paying off the credit card (12 per cent).

The survey also says that Will Carling, former captain of England's rugby side, "wants to become fluent in French and Italian". He also wants "to spend less money on wierd gadgets". Nothing, though, about winning back his place in the Harlequins side, from which he was recently dropped.

Anita Roddick's Body Shop empire is to lose Eric Helver, a board director and one of the company's key managers over the last 16 years. Eric. 62, will retire on New Year's Eve. He created Body Shop's first warehouse in 1982 at Naim House in Rustington, West Sussex. Four years later he established another warehouse and a head office for the company at Wick, West Sussex, which was opened by Diana.

Princess of Wales. In 1988 Eric joined the board and supervised a further move by the company to Littlehampton a

vear later. Gordon Roddick, husband of Anita and chairman of Body Shop International, paid tribute to Enc. "He joined us when we had fewer than 30 employees, and

Poland, South Africa, Sudan, has been the cornerstone of our manufacturing, purchasing and and most recently Russia. The Russian rejig invovled debts of operational business."

Mr Roddick went on: "As a di-

rector of Soapworks in Glasgow. Eric has played a central role in the renovation of the Easterhouse site and the acquisition of plant and machinery for an ininarive that has helped breathe new life into one of the most economically marginalised communities in Britain."

While Eric prepares to take it easy, Keith Clark has been elected to a second gruelling three-year term as senior partner of Britain's biggest law firm, Clifford Chance.

Keith, 53, is best known as a global "Mr Fixit", helping countires to reschedule their swereign debt. He has provided legal advice on debt restructurings for spokesman admitted, however. that: "Obviously debt rescheduling [for those countires] is an option." Sounds like Keith should keep his toothbrush handy, just in case. Grovelling apologies to Tim

Although Keith is a keen trav-

eller, a spokesman insists he will

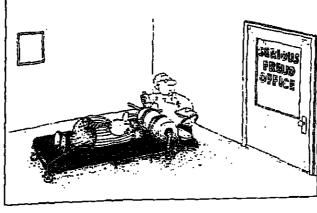
not being flying off to the Far East

to help Japan and South Korea sort

out their financial woes. The

Miller and Richard Timberlake. who recently sold 30 per cent of their unit trust business, Portfolio, to Liberty, not Fidelity as 1 wrote vesterday.

Merrill Lynch has poached Richard Bronk from Credit



sponsors of the flotation, said: This is a disappointment Small companies are high rist and until products product profits they always remain so. Reflec's flotation documen forecast the group making ar operating profit in the year to February 1998 but Mr Hart ad mitted it would not meet this target and refused to predict when it would break into the black.

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e gospel acci the gaffer

'My mind is very, very open and so is my mouth - as you've probably gathered. Hopefully I can synchronise them' - Tony Banks, on being named Minister of Sport

Sayings of the Quotemeister

It flashed through my mind that Rory might be taking the piss.

It was just as well I didn't say something like, 'Fuck off, Rory.'

Because that wouldn't have gone down too well. Tony Banks, friend of impressionist Rory Bremner, on receiving the call offering him the job of Minister Of Sport.

I know one thing. If I'd been Tony Blair, I wouldn't have

appointed me. Banks.
Tony Blair said to me, "Get in there and liven it up", and I'm

going to do precisely that. Banks on his suggestions to form a United Kingdom football team and for players to turn out for the

country they play in.

Picking the England side is a matter for Glenn Hoddle. Tony Banks is certainly livening things up. Downing Street statement

On certain subjects it's better to think before you speak.

Cesare Maldini, Italian national coach, on Banks' ideas. National flags should not be carried into the stadium, because then sport becomes almost an extension of war. I don't think you should have the playing of national anthems before football matches. Why stir people up? Banks.

When God gave Paul Gascoigne his football talent he took his brain out at the same time. Banks.

So much of women's tennis is treated like soft porn. We have yead nothing about Tim Henman or Greg Rusedski's choice of sunderwear or their body shapes. Banks during Wimbledon. The idea of throwing my arms around the Queen when Chelsea score, or screaming "the referee's a wanker", which I'm likely to do, probably would not go down too well in the Royal Box. I'm not going to have my enjoyment of one of the great days of my club spoiled by being next to Royalty of no fixed abode. Banks, on being offered a seat in the Royal Box for

If I had to choose between being the Sports Minister or a Chelsea supporter, I wouldn't be the Sports Minister. Banks,

in the run-up to the final. The idea that the only sports worth encouraging are competitive sports is bollocks. Its ideological bollocks. And I hope that you ain't going to see much ideological bollocks

I'll have a hell of a job not leaping up if he scores. Banks, on Italian striker Gianfranco Zola before the crucial World Cup

A cosy stitch-up. Tony Blair on Uefa's backing of Germany's 2006 World Cup bid. If people don't like the way I do things, stuff 'em. Banks.

The gospel according to the gaffer

I am ugly, but I have other qualities. You, I think you have problems with your wife but you seem a nice person. Georges
Leekens, Relgium coach, asked about the spirit in his squad before the World Cup play-off against Ireland.

goals. Danny Wilson, Barnsley manager, after his side's defeat to Manchester United.

I want this to become my ticket to dreams. I came by underground because I wanted to know the way the fans feel coming to Spurs. Christian Gross, new Tottenham manager, holding up a Tube ticket at the club's press conference. They have the potential to be a sleeping giant. Chris Waddle, on his new side, Burnley.

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We are developing our youth policy. Kenny Dalglish, Newcastle United manager, after acquiring the aging Ian Rush, John Barnes and Stuart Pearce in the close season.

I don't want to be anyone's assistant but I'd go to Manchester United as the kit manager. Sammy McIlroy, Macclesfield manager and former United player, on his career ambitions. I don't know how old I was at the start of the game, but I'm 93 now. It was like 120 years in Alcatraz. Martin O'Neill, of Leicester City, after his team's Coca-Cola Cup semi-final victory over Wimbledon on away goals.

I will spend next week coaching my players on how to get their hands out of the way of a ball belted at them from six yards and travelling at 120mph. Gary Megson, of Stockport, upset at the penalty awarded against his side in a 1-0 defeat at Reading. Perhaps he did go in with two feet, but I thought referees in England allowed that. Rund Gullit, of Chelsea, after a challenge by Dennis Wise on Arsenal's Patrick Vieira.

I'm going to be as natural as I can - a right miserable bastard. Ray Harford, taking over at West Bromwich Albion. Magnifico, as they say in Paris. Peter Reid, of Sunderland, on a lay by Lionel Perez.

think he will eventually play for England. Reid predicts a callup for Lee Clark. A couple of hours later, the player was drafted

Trials and tribulations, troubles and treachery

You must be daft. No one person can throw a game. Bruce Grobbelian, on trial for match-fixing with Hans Segers, John Fashana and others.

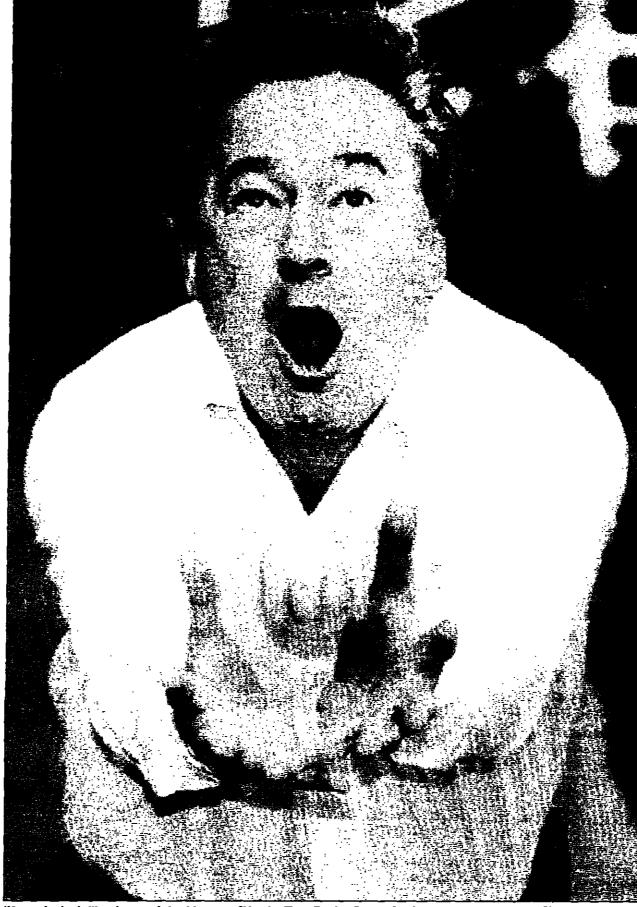
Christopher Vincent is the repository of treachery. He is a serpent-no creator of literature could have invented him. He slithers forward to his riches, hoping you will do right by him. He might as well have taken the oath on a cheque-book. Rodney Klevan, Grobbelaur's barrister, on the chief prosecution witness. Maybe we'll have to decide this on penalties. But we'll win because we've got two goalkeepers. Grobbelaar, after the jury in

Nobody has the right to win at all costs... What happened was a dirty trick an unworthy blow which in everyday life would have criminal consequences. "Corriere dello Sport" editorial following the shunt in the European Grand Prix that put Michael Schumacher out and gave Jacques Villeneuve the world title. I knew Michael was capable of just taking me off, and that's

what he tried to do. Villeneuve. Certainly, I closed the door. It was clearly about winning it, all or nothing, and there was nothing more to lose. Without me, Jacques would have more or less driven into the gravel pit. That's why I don't quite understand the situation now. Schumou He is a very good player but a shit man. Frank Lebeouf, of Cheisea, on Arsenal's Dennis Bergkamp, whom he accused of trying to elbow him.

We would prefer not to play Pontypridd at all. They are semi-civilised animals. Laurent Seigne, Brive coach, following the bar-room brand between the two sides, before their second game. Tiger Woods has shown the world he is a spoiled brat. If he doesn't get what he wants instantly on the course he flies into an infantile rage. It's pathetic and the players don't like it. Mac

He didn't pull up. He's a coward. Donovan Baile; on Michael O'Grady, golf entrepreneur. Johnson, after winning the \$1m (£600,000) head-to-head chal-



'If people don't like the way I do things, stuff 'em' - Tony Banks, Sports Minister

Ears and tears in boxing spheres

I snapped in that ring and did something that I have never done before and will never do again. I apologise to the world. Mike Tyson, two days after being disqualified for biting off a piece

of Evander Holyfield's ear.

I have something he probably wants. Mitch Libonati, cleaner, on taking the chunk of ear to the champion's dressing-room. Holyfield is not the warrior he claims he is. He got a nick on his ear and he quit. Tyson.

Boxers should eat before they fight. Spivester Stallone, at

When he walked away I thought it was a joke. I thought he was trying to fool me so he could sucker-punch me. Lennox Lewis. after beating Oliver McCall, who ended the fight in tears. I am never going to get beat. I am going to retire a legend.

Naseem Hamed, before beating Billy Hardy. I wasn't there when he killed the guy, but shit, if the guy got killed he was probably doing something he shouldn't have been doing. Tyson on his manager Don King, who served four years for beating a man to death.

People like Don King shouldn't be allowed to be in boxing. He's a disgrace to the human race. Frank Maloney, Lennox

I'm going to get on the aeroplane tomorrow and bare my big, black ass out the window and show what I think of Denmark. Larry Holmes, the former heavyweight champion, after losing on a split decision to Denmark's Brian Neilsen.

Women are made for loving and not hitting. Women's boxing could attract some kinky people. I am all against it. Henry Cooper.

Sex and violence and wild, wild athletes

He's the only player I've ever known who could drink 16 pints and still play football the next day. Paul Gascoigne, on why his hero is Bryan Robson.

Smoke billowed out of the toilets when the door was opened. Caitlin Cherry, waitress at the restaurant in New Zealand which Phil Tufnell was asked to leave after ollegedly smoking a joint. I won't let them do it at the hotel where we're staying but I won't object if they rent a house or find a place to do it. Daniel Passarella, Argentina coach, consents to his players having sex during the World Cup finals.

I have worked hard on my own by doing lots of swimming, cycling and making love as often as possible. Giantuca Vialli, of Chelsea, on his fitness regime.

I tackle to hurt people - Samoan players are like that. When they go for a hit, the aim is to put the player out so he never comes back. Terry Fanolua, Gloucester's Western Samoan signing There were lots of pictures of Martina [Hingis]'s knickers and Anna [Kournikova]'s short skirt. This year I think they went too far. These are 15- and 16-year-olds. These are babies. Monica Seles, on this year's Wimbledon.

She may be a Light Blue, but she'll be a dark blue when she's finished. Cambridge rugby fan on the Varsity match streaker. She's got nipples like organ stops. Roger Black, British athletics team captain, on heptathlete Denise Lewis's photo spread in 'Total Sport'.

I am a British spy. You can't do this. Alex Higgins, on being arrested in a Manchester hotel.

three lions on their chests it

should be the greatest honour of

their lives. If there is a laissez-

faire attitude then we have a

problem. Lord MacLaurin, Eng-

Steve Waugh was saying just

how much the Australians re-

spect Atherton. He said, "they say

he's like a cockroach you can't

kill. You stamp on him but he

keeps coming back." Adam Hol-

lioake on the England captain,

It serves them right for sending

us Rolf Harris. Bernard Manning,

If anyone slags us off after that,

they need beheading. Darren

Gough, on England's memorable

In terms of the impact he can

make on the game, he's the

most important golfer who has

ever played. Tom Watson on Tiger

The only way I can create such

arm speed is when I drive with my

elbow hanging out of the car win-

dow. Nick Faldo on Woods' driving.

You'll nae turn this place into a

pitch and putt. Speciator to Woods

after the world No 1 found the rough

I'm a Cablinasian. Woods, who is

a quarter black, a quarter Thai. a

quarter Chinese, one-eighth white

in practice for the Open.

on Australia's first-Test defeat.

first day of the Ashes series.

Woods, at the US Masters.

Michael Atherton.

land Cricket Board chairman.

'Today, Italy is inferior to England' - Gazzetta dello Sport

at diving, cheating, trying to waste time. Paul Gascoigne on England's success in the World Cup qualifier in Rome.

He looked like a pint of Guinness running around. Gascoigne on the bandaged head of captain Paul Ince.

I look like a black Terry Butcher at the moment. I didn't want the bandage on because I thought I'd look silly. But I don't

care now Ince. They've become a great side. Cesare Maldini, Italy's coach, on

Today, Italy is inferior to England. It doesn't have its sense of security, its control of play and not even - listen to this - its adaptability. The lions who once knew only how to launch the ball and it up, now dribble with skill, take control of the action, take possession with elegance and look for the winning chance. "Gazzetta

dello Sport". We are talking about a new epoch. "La Repubblica", Italian newspaper, on Roberto Baggio's decision to shave off his ponytail. I have always planned to retire

Manchester United I have reached the pinnacle of my career. Eric Cantona, on retiring from football.

The page has turned. Eric has gone to become a film actor. I preferred it when he was a footballer. I was proud of him. Maybe I will be proud of him in Park crisis. Eleanore Cantona, Eric's mum. I am the steering wheel. My foot is on the accelerator and the brake. The deal simply means we will have a bigger engine. Sam

We played the Italians at their Hammam, managing director of I could get Spurs into the top six solete spring into a coiled spring own game. They are very good Wimbledon, on selling part of his stake in the club.

Ronaldius: an infantile disease of footballing neoliberalism. "Famiglia Cristiana", Italy's best-selling magazine, on the lucrative move of Ronaldo to Internazionale. The thrill of the European Cup

was the immediate elimination. with one's chest bared. He who is hit dies. Alfredo Stefano on the Champions' League format. There has been too much slop-

The golden tit, me, won't go on forever. Jack Hayward, Wolverhampton Wanderers owner.

I told them all - the butlers, the chambermaids, everybody - to have the day off and go and watch the game. I even had to make my own lunch. The Duke of Devonshire, president of Chesterrun under it, tackle, cross and mix field, on the F4 Cup semi-final against Middlesbrough.

I'm not mad. I cannot do it. If I train every day, I will die. Diego Maradona, on Boca Juniors' offer to take him back if he undertakes to train every day. This is a highly sought-after lo-

cation. We don't want someone rolling up and making it look like some kind of gypsy encampwhen I was at the top and at ment Neighbour of Frode Grodas, after the Chelsea goolkeeper was refused permission by his residents association to put up a satellite dish. Everton is a house on fire, the walls are down and, if the blaze isn't put out soon, it will engulf the entire club. Alan Ball, former Everton player, on the Goodison

his new career, but not yet. The FA is like Madame Tussand's. We tell our people to keep them moving so we can tell them apart from the dummies. Alan Sugar, Spurs chairman, at the

and into Europe. Uri Geller. If he was in Stur Trek, he'd be the best player of whichever solar system they were in. Ian Wright on his Arsenal team-mate, Dennis

Bergkamp. The team are worshipped in my town. We love them and we think the team is well organised and has got high skills in football. Zakaria Yusuf Mwam-zandi, of Kenyan village side Msambweni FC, who changed their name to piness and disregard for money. Darlington (The Quakers) FC after seeing them lose to Leeds in the Coca-Cola Cup iast year.

> ing down. It was really disgusting. Ian Botting, chairman of Easthourne FC, who found a pig's head in the dug-out before a match. Armenian Footballer, Very Hairy. Credit cards accepted. With Moustache, Advertisement in massage section of the "Fulham Chronicle's" classified pages. Rughy union is a heast's game

The eyes were cut out and hang-

played by gentlemen, soccer is a gentlemen's game played by beasts, American football is a heast's game played by beasts and rugby league is a beast's game played by demons. Robbie Paul, Bradford Bulls captain.

This jersey is going to win the World Cup. Just make sure that when the final comes you are wearing it and not stuck at home watching some other bastard wear it. Clive Woodward to his England rugby union squad.

Before Christmas we had a bad taste in our mouth, but we shrugged off the colwebs. Our jaded players from early in the week transformed from an ob-

and threw off the psychological bondage. They responded spontaneously and made large dents in the scoreboard. Jack Rowell. then England RU coach, after the Five Nations' victory over Scotland. We will get better. Christian

Cullen, All Blacks full-back, after the 81-3 win over Llanelli. He could come out with an axe and he wouldn't get sent off. Great Britain RL manager Phil Lowe after Australian hard-man Gorden Tallis escaped dismissal for three high tackles in the second Test. My wife hits harder than him. Terry O'Connor, Wigan forward, on his brawl with Tallis in the World

Club Championship. I was watching some rugby for the first time. It made me think that tennis players are maybe a bunch of sissies. We'd better beef things up. John McEnroe after Twickenham rugby union Test. If God had meant for sun to shine on Wimbledon, he would have put it in Florida. The "Mi-

ami Herald". Don't stand there like the Statue of Liberty, give me some balls. Jeff Tarango, Wimbledon controversialist, to ball-girl during his defeat to Rodolphe Gilbert.

I have freed myself from the chains of the public. Boris Becker, who played his last Grand Slam at Wimbledon

and laid-back, lazy black men. Speaker at the "Caribbean Experience" briefing for the England cricket team, on what to expect in the West Indies. I expect our cricketers to die for

England. When they wear those

and one-eighth American Indian. Everyone wants more money and it's better in my bank account Rum and coke, bananas, sugar than theirs. Eddie Irvine, after Fer-

rari extended his contract. I didn't see what had happened to him. Our mirrors don't see that far back. Michael Schumacher on Damon Hill's parade-lap exit from the Melbourne Grand Prix.

It would be ludicrous to suggest that my brothers and I were down to our last three camels, but we can no longer go on as we have

of owning horses is like driving with a flat tyre. All we seek is the luxury of a slow puncture. Sheikh Mohammed, racing's most powerful owner, threatens to remove his horses from Britain.

Their sole concern is to squeeze every last pound for their own purely selfish interests. The Sheikh on the bookmakers.

My Mum set five or six chapels ablaze because she lit so many candles for me. Maybe now she'll shut up about me getting a proper job. Ken Doherty, after beating Stephen Hendry to become world snooker champion. . I don't know why I do so well abroad. Perhaps it's because there's not much else to do and you can't nip out to the bookies

to back three doubles and a treble at Fontwell. John Parrott at the German Open. My son was sat having his breakfast the other day and he said. "You'll be finished by tomorrow. won't you daddy, because you just

play, lose and come home" Steve Davis reveals the motivational secret behind his victory in the Benson and Hedges Masters final. It felt like someone was stubbing a burning cigarette in my back for an hour and a half. Chris Board-

man after a 33-mile time-trial the day before he pulled out. It's a rather strange sensation slic-

ing away at yourself with a scalpel. Pete Goss, competitor in the l'endée Globe yacht race, who operated on his two hernias at sea. It was like a shadow going past. Li: McColgan, beaten by one second in the London Marathon by Joyce Chepchumba.

Speed skating is like water beetles on a schirligig Goro Yoshimura, mayor of Nagano, scene of the 1998 Winter Olympics.

Compiled by Chris Maume

One Man to shade the grey showdown and hush critics

One Man has won the last two runnings of the King George VI Chase, he is unbeaten this season and is favourite to collect the prize for the third time on Boxing Day, yet still he has his detractors. Richard

Edmondson suggests they

should be ignored. For weeks now the talk has been of grey horses. The freakish sequence of notable successes for the ashen-faced - such as One Man. Suny Bay, Senor El Betrutti, The Grey Monk and Reikeel - have led to many comparisons with those of that hue from the past.

There has been mention of Airborne and Nicolaus Silver. the last grey winners of the Derby and Grand National respectively. The name of Stalbridge Colonist, who beat Arkle in the Hennessy Gold Cup at a time when they were putting anvils rather than lead weights in the great horse's weight cloth, has also been resurrected. And, of course, the loudest fanfare has been saved for Desert Orchid. the last truly great public horse.

and study of the present grey again. Certainly, One Man both his starts this season (One eminences one horse has stood out. For while the milestones and glory moments of the majurity have been applauded, it is a peculiar fact that when One Man is discussed the collective voice chooses to examine failure rather than achievement.

So while the nine-year-old may have won 18 races and more than £320,000 in prize- the horse's trainer, believes money, the beam always seems to fall on the two contests that have witnessed him at his weakest. One Man, it must be said, has looked quite horrible on his two efforts in the Cheltenham Gold Cup. On both occasions he has appeared the likely winner two fences out before shrivelling as quickly as a crisp packet on the fire at the foot of the final ascent.

It would be cruel and unjustified if this was to be the abiding memory of the horse. Over three miles on flat tracks One Man is as formidable as a starying tiger, and for those who have rubbished him in the build-up to the King George VI Chase at Kempton on Boxing Day the salutary message is that that is exactly the examination the chunky horse will face on Friday.

It may be that a residual affection for Desert Orchid means

brushes the path for his detractors by the way he behaves in the closing stages of his contests.

The sight has become familiar. One Man travels in his races as if only a freak act of nature can move him off course. but on the run-in he often looks like a leaf being tossed around in a storm. Gordon Richards

RICHARD EDMONDSON NAP: One Man (Kempton 2.20) **NB: Secret Spring** (Kempton 1.45)

these last-minute collapses to be evidence of non-staying, but as One Man effects this drama over a range of distances there must more to it than that.

Richard Dunwoody, the riding half of the partnership, has long wanted to have his One2One with One Man. His theory is that the horse might be protecting himself from the onset of a pain he has felt before by easing up.

Whatever the cause, One Man is now considered vulnerable on Friday to anything with a smattering of class and a central rod of resolution. Suny that some of racing's followers Bay is thought by many to be a Among all the recollections are unable to let their hearts go roaring danger as he has won

Man has done the same).

The fellow grey has stepped up a shelf in performance this campaign with facile wins at Haydock and in the Hennessy Gold Cup. Yet he comes to this race almost as an afterthought as Sunbury is considered by his connections to be the domain If there is a temptation to

back Suny Bay over the next few days it should be for the Cheltenham Gold Cup. If he tails in the King George there will be legitimate excuse in the configuration of the track and his price will barely alter, but should he win there will inevitably be an immediate and significant contraction for the Festival. The Tote are largest at 6-1 for the Blue Riband. The composition of the King

George field is as yet imprecise. even though nine runners were declared yesterday. It it rains significantly, as the forecasters tell us it might, then both Rough Quest and See More Business will start but Senor El Betrutti will be removed from consideration. In any case, the Senor may find the distance too great.

Rough Quest, last year's Grand National winner, worked quite beautifully on Terry Casey's gallops on Monday and



Coral and William Hill to reach the frame. Barton Bank is shorter than Rough Quest in the

looks a nice price at 9-1 with honest display is almost assured, he is not at his perkiest when there are puddles around. ONE MAN (nap 2.20), too,

ing any worse than good to soft, If he makes it three con yet the image of his previous success here, and in the Sandown version of January 1996, is too powerful to ignore. of the grey's critics.

King Georges it is to be non that this is also the percept which is branded in the and

MARKET RASEN

12.30 Toulston Lady 1.0 Dandy Des Plauts 1.35 Price's Hill 2.05 Colour Code 2.35 Dana Point 3.05 Non Vintage 3.35 Baher

GOING: Chase course: Soft (Good to Soft in back straight). Hur-GOING: Chase course: Soft (Good to Soft in back streight), Hurdle course: Good to Soft (Soft in straight).

• Right-hand, sharp, undulating circuit, Run-in of one furlong.
• Course is E of town on ASSI ADMISSION: Cub 12:50; Tatterials 18:50 (DAPs who are members of course) Jubide Cub hathorics; Siver Ring 15: (Aubide Cub OAPs hatf-price): CAR PARK: Free.
• LEADING TRAINERS: Mrs M Revaley 23-98 (23:5%), M Pipe 16-96 (23:2%), J RizzGarald 14-99 (83:%), K Morgan 14-19 (16:%),
• LEADING JOCKEYS: P Niver 20-16 (17:%), L Wyer 19-99 (82:%),
• FAVOURITES: 203-583 (34.8%),

BLINKERED FIRST TIME: Marchant Ming (2.35)

– 9 december – BETTING: 5-2 Caldbury, 7-2 Toulston Lady, 9-2 Thomas Crown, Africa Sun, 13-2 Lucy Tuffy, 8-1 Baasm, 12-1 Brandon Bridge, 16-1 others 1.00 BRUCE & JOE CARR NOVICE HANDI-CAP CHASE (CLASS E) £4,400 3m 1f

7 40-SFT DARDY DES PLAUTS (16) Mrs Smith 6 10 6 . G F Ryen (5) 8 1/73-1 MARNET GOSSIP (21) (0) R Aher 7 10 5 Mr J Tizzard (50 9 PUZSI RECORD LOVER (284) M Chapman 7 10 0 . . W Worthington 10 066FP ASK FOR BARNEY (807) 3 Rothwell 8 10 0 . . . W Dwan

Minimum weight: 10st True handicap weight Ask For Barney 9st 6tb. SETTING: 9-4 Bassenhally, 3-1 Market Gossip, 9-2 Pearl's Choice, 7-1 Easy Breezy, 8-1 Se Brave, 12-1 Sireric, Record Lover, 16-1 others

1.35 CLUGSTON LINCOLNSHIRE NATIONAL (HANDICAP CHASE) (CLASS C) £13,000 added 4m 1f

12.35 The Village Way 1.05 Bold Romeo 1.35

St Mellion Leisure 2.05 Wayfarers Way 2.35 The

Brewer 3.05 Spearhead Again 3.35 Distant Storm

GOING: Good to Soft.

GOING: Good to Soft.

Pight-hand course with 300yd run-in.
Course is N of city on A49, ADMISSION: Club \$13; Tattersalis £0, course enchance £5 CAR PARK: Free.

EADING TRAINERS: M Pipe 34-99 (34-3%). N Twiston-Davies 26-98 (271%). N Henderson 14-30 (45-7%) P Hobbs 14-62 (226%).

EADING JOCKEYS: J R Kavanagh 10-57 (175%). C Maude 9-49 (88%). N Williamson 8-54 (45-8%). S Wyrms 5-49 (102%).

FAVOLITIES: 205-520 (39-4%).

BLINKERED FIRST TIME: Storm Point (235)(visored). Over The Wrekin (305)

12.35 GOOSE NOVICE HURDLE (CLASS E) (DIV I) £3,000 added 2m 3f 110yds

O NUMS 107 BOY TIES 31 M STEERS 7 TO 12 . A REQUIRED COSE PERFIX LARK (\$75) F STOTEMENT 7 TO 12 . G HOSSIN GOS SARAS DELIGHT (\$9) D Micholon 5 TO 12 . Mr O McPhall 50346 SHORE PARTY (\$7) N Treston-Dames 5 TO 12 . The OO-

- 16 declared -BETTING: 5-2 Shore Party, 3-1 Strat Delight, 7-2 The Full Monty, 5-1 Bullider Boy, 8-1 Go Britannia, 12-1 Mazzleo, 25-1 others

1.05 GOOSE NOVICE HURDLE (CLASS E)

403 FTIZMAJRICE (20) C Prode 5 to 2 ... Shichty

6500 HENRY TUDOR (104) A James 5 to 12 ... Shichty

P5 JOLTO (189) W Jerks 9 to 2 ... T Jenks

90 LATCHFORD (23) 1000-25 5 5 5 5

5 (500 HENRY TUDOR (194) A James 5 to 2 Gary Lyons
6 P.5 JOLTO (198) W. Jerks 9 to 2 T. Jerks
7 JOLTO (198) W. Jerks 9 to 2 Ethiophond (2)
8 0 MR LAMBRIN (9) Mr. L. Wittmenn 5 to 2 Ethiophond (2)
9 0 MGELLO (20) F Alver 9 to 2 Mr. J D Moore (7)
10 USE SEVERIN REEF (22) J M Britishy 6 to 2 Mr. J D Moore (7)
11 SHARP PROGRESS (735) A P. Jones 4 to 2 X Abpuru (5)
12 D.7 SELVER GRLL (20) H 1-bre 5 to 2 G Sherikin (7)
13 21-52 THE VALAGE WAY (219) (EP) Miss V Williams 6 to 2 S Wyrous
14 BUSS OF MAY N 1-zoo-5 TO J R Konsangh
15 PC.00 FOREST ROSE (26) M Sheppard 7 to 7 G Mogra (3)
16 39-0 TARA GALE (25) J Merch 9 to 1 Lorenthins (5)
16 JERTINGS 7 4 Fizzmaurice, 15-8 The Williage Way, 6-1 Tara Gelle, 16-1 FightIng Times, Sharp Progress, 20-1 Latchiord, 25-1 others

1.35 MINCE PIE SELLING HANDICAP HUR-DLE (CLASS G) £2,400 added 3m 2f

Minimum weight 10s. The Familian weights, Just For A Feeson Sat 90 Portolena Sat St. Green King Sat 70. The Cheese Earon Sat 40 BETTING: 3-1 Via Del Quatra, 7-2 Just For A Reason, 4-1 Weather Wise, 9-2 Star Performet, 5-1 St Mellion Leisure, 12-1 Green King, 14-1 others

(DfV II) £3,000 added 2m 3f 110yds

0- OYSTER DELIGHT (272) D Carry 6 10 7. Miss E J Jones (7) 0- RISKY ROSE (F160) Graethe Roe 5 10 7 - D J Motist

HEREFORD

Minimum weight: 10st. True handicap weight: D'Arbiay Street 9st 13th. Caridwen 9st 11th. Woodlands Genhire 8th 12th. BEFTING: 11-4 Cats Run, D'Arbiay Street, 3-1 Price's Hill, 9-2 Hillwells, 7-1 Master Boston, Cerlidwen, 50-1 Woodlands Genhire

2.05 SANDILANDS HOLIDAYS MAIDEN HURDLE (CLASS F) £2,500 2m 3f 110yds

RETTING: 6-5 Colour Code, 5-1 Ferrers, 11-2 Siberian Henry, 7-1 Tera-Bro

2.35 ROSELAND KILVINGTON HANDICAP HURDLE (CLASS D) 26,500 2m 3f 110yds

3.05 DUCKWORTH FREELANDER NOVICE CHASE (CLASS D) £5,200 2m 1f 110yds

o Gold. 5-2 Non Vint

3.35 HON LANE NOVICE CLAIMING HURDLE (CLASS G) 52,200 2m 1f 110yds

- 14 declared -BETTING: 9-4 Sally's Twins, 3-1 Shark, 5-1 Carrolls Rock, Baher, 8-1 Lord Hastle, 12-1 Guy's Gambie, Lady Silk, Steem On, 20-1 others

2.05 TOTE NOVICE HANDICAP CHASE (CLASS D) £5,000 added 2m 3f

12-51 WAYFARERS WAY (15) (C) N Henderson 6 it 10... If Kenznagh 324,F RAPHALE BODINE (65) Mss. V Waterns 8 it 10... S McNeal 0324.F RAPHALE BODINE (65) Mss. V Waterns 8 it 10... S McNeal 0324.F RAPHALE BODINE (65) Mss. V Waterns 8 it 10... S McNeal 0324.F RAPHALE BODINE (75) Mss. Parkey 7 it 11 Msr. J D Moore (7) F6-674 BOLD ACRE (10) (C) J M Bradby 7 it 11 Msr. J D Moore (7) L Adaptary (6) E 20-241 WMRNOW (16) (D) Mss. H Kright 7 it 0... J Culloty 400P-0 THE CROOKED DAK (22) N Tenson-Daves 5 it 1... J Lentis 00-492 SENSE OF VALUE (21) J Smith 8 it 0... Msr O McPhall (7) 532431 CANT SAY (6) J M Bradby 5 it 0 (7es) ... S Wynne 430-40 DESERT CALM (17) D McCan 8 it 0... V Statbary B -10 declared -

- 10 declared -m: 10st. True weights: Can't Say 9st 6th, Decent Caim 9st 0th

BETTING: 7-4 Wayfarers Way, 5-1 Winnow, Can't Say, 8-1 Bold Acre, 10-1 Purbeck Cavaller, Sense Of Value, 12-1 Raphael Bodine, 14-1 others

2.35 HUGHES CATERERS HANDICAP HUR-DLE (CLASS F) £4,000 2m 3f 110yds

3.05 PLUM PUDDING NOVICE CHASE (CLASS E) £4,500 added 3m 1f 110yds

1 5540 BALLYDOUGAN (B) (D) R Machew 9 11 5 J Carlony V
2 075-3 SPEARHEAD AGAIN (B) (D) R Machew 9 11 5 J Carlony V
3 075-3 SPEARHEAD AGAIN (B) (B) Mass V Williams 8 11 5 S Kinly (7)
4 072-4 BAGALINO (22) T Porsiz 7 10 2 S Wyrne
5 0750 FRST HARWEST (272) C Senne: 20 32 Mr P Hardy
6 5530-3 FREDDIE MUCK (104) (BP) N Tarear-Carlons 7 10 2 T Jedes
7 0050 FROWN (256) P Bowen 7 10 2 JR Kensangh
7 POPP JEMARO (18) W Jerks 6 20 2 Gery Lyons
9 USA-BY ORPHAN SPA (B) G McCourt 5 10 2 D 2 Lorentins (5) B
1 53-67 COUNTRY STORE (200 A P Jones 5 7 7 S McMedil

11 53-675 COUNTRY STORE (20) A P Lores 5 17 S MeNei 12 .74-F4 HOPPERDANTE (30) T George 7 10 7 Jur O McPhail (7)

- 12 declared -BETTING: 7-4 Freddie Muck, 7-2 Spearheed Again, 6-1 Bagalino, 8-1 Hopperdante, 10-1 Ballydougan, 12-1 Fret Harvest, Country Store, 16-1 others

3.35 BLANDFORD BETTING NOVICE HAND-ICAP HURDLE (CLASS E) 53,500 2m 1f

Manmum weicht, 10st. True handrag werigt. Lady Rosetter, Sor Cit BETTING: 3-1 Distant Storm, 7-2 Blaze Of Song, Studio Thing, 5-1 Margi Boo, 7-1 Dovetto, 10-1 Bad Sentrich, 20-1 Rompelstiffskin; 25-1 others

.5BCO- POT BLACKBIRD 2701 R Brotherer 8 108_

SEDGEFIELD 1.00 Kakashda 1.30 Dark Oak 2.00 Executive Design 2.30 Marble Man 3.00 Stylish Interval 3.30 Durano

GOING: Good to Soft GOING: Good to Soft

Left-hand, undulating course. Easy tences and long run in Course is tim SE of town near proteon of A669 and A177 ADMISSION: Paddock C3 (OAFS (4) Chourse L. CAR PARK: Paddock C3 (OAFS (4) Chourse L. CAR PARK: Paddock C2 real free.

LEADING TRAINERS: Mrs M Reveley 67 (2) (29%) J Howard Johnson 20-61 ((29%) GM Moore 12-12 (12%) J Howard Johnson 20-61 ((29%) GM Moore 12-12 (12%) J J Howard Johnson 20-61 ((29%) T Reed 12 75 (121%)

LEADING JOCKEYS: P Niver 52-12 (10%) L Wyer 22 (107 (20%) J N Smith 14-99 (15.7%) T Reed 12 75 (121%)

FAVOURITES: (22-58) (39.2%)

BLINKERED FIRST TIME: Alical (100) Miss Colette (130) Cadeaux Première (20) UK Hygiene (230)

1.00 RED ONION NOVICE HURDLE (CLASS E) £3,000 added 3m 3f 110yds

BETTING: 5-4 For Cathal, 17-8 Birkdale, 7-1 Mil-Dot, 8-1 Kakashda, 25-1

1.30 KEN BRIGHT STILL GOING AFTER ALL THESE YEARS HANDICAP CHASE (CLASS E) £5,000 added 3m 3f RUSSIAN CASTLE (15) (CD) 1 Wade 8 m m CARK CAK (23) (C) 1 Curte 7 m 8 ANOTHÉR VENTURE (16) F Murchy 7 11 3

6 (02:34 FERM LEADER (23) (89) C Graft 7 10 6
Mrs S cares 6
1 418322 KIBBY BANK (721) J Howard Johnson 8 to 2 ... R Supple
9 430LP OLE OLE (17) (C) Mrs E Moscorp in 10 0 ... Memoton (7) 0
10 52-505 MRS COLETTE (18) (CD) Mrs D Thomson 9 10 0 L O'Hera B 11 (0-225* TUDOR FELLOW (17) J Wade 8 10 0 ... C McCommack (5) ... 11 declared -...

- 11 declared Minimum weight: 10st, Time handroap weights. Ole Ole 9st 11th, Miss Colette 9st 9th, Tudor Fellow 9st 8th
BETTING: 3-1 Dark Calt, 7-2 Fern Leeder, 4-1 Tudor Fellow, 5-1 Sireric,
10-1 Titly, Another Venture, 12-1 Rya Crossing, Kibby Bank, 14-1 others 2.00 DURHAM INNS LTD. NOVICE CHASE

1 4P-IP1 CHIPPED OUT (16) (CD) M Technite 7 in 2 C McCormack (5) 2 5-U APACHE RAIDER (16) F Murphy 5 10 2 L O'Here 3 51503 CADEAUX PREMIERE (9) D Smith 6 10 2 F Leathy (5) B Lamb 7 10 2 J Burket (CLASS E) £4,100 added 2m 5f

is probably not at his best on gomarket, and, while another 9 10/5 5 EXECUTIVE DESIGN (43) Mrs VI Reveloy 5 10 12 ... N Smith 9 29/1-4 JILLS JOY (17) A Streets 5 10 12 ... T Buy 17 17 10 RIVER CHALLENGE (20) JUSON 6 10 12 ... R Supple 11 20/29 SILLARS STALKER (578) (CD) Mrs A Swinbank 9 10 12 ... OP 2:3 STAGE FRIGHT (21) F Murphy 6 10 2 E Callaghan C PS: 36 THE BIRD O'DONNELL (28) Mrs A Naughton 11 10 12

> Figure 2 - 13 recuseu
> BETTING: evens Executive Design, 5-1 Chipped Out, 6-1 River Charlenge, 7-1 Stage Fright, 14-1 Cadeaux Premiere, Castle Red, 20-1 others 2.30 RENT ROLL CUP HANDICAP CHASE

(CLASS E) £5,000 added 2m 110yds

Mananum weight 10st True handscap weights. Kildrummy Castle 9st 11fb, With Hygers 91 (8), Stutten 8st 70 BETTING: 5-2 This is My Life, 7-2 Kildrummy Castle, 5-1 Val De Rama, 11-2 Martie Man, 7-1 Xelpete, Uk Hyglene, 10-1 Shahgram, 20-1 officers

3.00 UNION HALL SIENNA STUD HANDICAP HURDLE (CLASS E) \$3,500 2m 5f 110yds 2FF-3P AMAZING SAIL (23) (CD) Miss M Militar 4 11 1 D Benday

Miramum weight: 10st True handicap weighte: Sissington Times 9at 9tb, Shelfon Abbay 9st 5tb, Baractormer 9st 0tb. BETTIMG: 3-1 Kinda Groovy, 4-1 Toathiba Talit, Bibran, 7-1 Brancher, 8-1 Topotherorthracing, Amazing Sali, 10-1 Diseington Times, 12-1 others

3.30 HALLGARTH MANOR HOTEL HANDI-CAP HURDLE (CLASS E) £3,500 2m 1f

8 SUBSUS HUDBERLATE (17) — 8 declared —
Minimum weight: 10st, True handicap weights: General's Orders 9st 12th.

Nocatchin St. 7b, Rubsian 7st 116 BETTING: 3-1 Quango, 7-2 Fatebalkheir, 4-1 Diamond Beach, 9-2 Durano, 5-1 General's Orders, 10-1 Kinstenboech, Nocatchin, 33-1 Rubsian

WOLVERHAMPTON 1.15 Napier Star 1.40 Faylk 2.15 Frolicking

2.45 Elite Hope 3.15 Democrat 3.50 Rex Mundi 4.20 Genuine John 4.50 Chadleigh Lane GOING: Standard. STALLS: Inside. DRAW ADVANTAGE: High from 6f to 1m 4f.

Fibresand, left-hand, oval course

● Fibresand, left-hand, oval course.
● Course is N of town on A449 Wolverhampson station im. AD-MISSION: Gub £15; Tattersals £6 (OAP members of Diamond Club £4); Viewing Restaurant £2590 including entrance and meet. CAR PARIX: tree.
● LEADING TRAINERS: R Hollinshead — 60 winners from 586

● LEADING TRAINERS: R Hollinshedd — 50 withers from 586 runners gives a success ratio of 102%; M Johnston 53 from 236 (22.5%); J Berry 43 from 301 (14.3%); P Evans 31 from 304 (9.6%) ● LEADING JOCKEYS: J Cutinn 25 wins from 394 rides gives a success ratio of 6.3%; F Lynch 24 from 242 (9.9%). A Clark 23 from 253 (11.3%); D Wright 23 from 252 (91%) ● FAVOURITES: 403 wins in 1246 races (22.3%) BLINKERED FIRST TIME: Head Gardener (visored). Red Phannacia Care Manne 19 from 1240 (12.5%).

1.15 CHRIS MASSEY'S BIRTHDAY HANDI-CAP (CLASS E) (DIV I) £4,025 6f

1 10003 TANG-LD (13) (CD) D Chapman 6 10 A Cultime 5 100003 TANG-LD (13) (CD) D Chapman 6 10 A Cultime 5 100000 DOUBLE-0 (13) (CD) W Janes 3 9 10 J Quimn 2 3 00003 RAMSEY HOPE (7) (CD) C Parturs 4 9 11 P Roberts (3) 3 V 4 54301 MMC*S DOUBLE (26) (CD) Gay haleway 3 9 7 A Whetan (3) 18 5 300000 MAPIER STAR (8) (CI) (D) ATS N Maccadey 4 9 7 10 Biggs 4 V 6 00000 VILLAGE NATIVE (18) (CI) (D) A C-3000014 9 7 10 Biggs 4 V 6 000000 U-NO-HARRY (25) (D) P Indirested 4 8 F Lynch 6 200004 RENNYHOLME (18) (C) A W-2000016 7 11 D Wright 7 8 declared - 8 declared - 8 ETTING: 3-1 Village Native, 4-1 Ramsey Hope, 11-2 Takhild, U-No-Harry, Resmyholme, 13-2 Mike's Double, 8-1 Napier Star, 14-1 Double-O

1.40 BREAD SAUCE MAIDEN STAKES (CLASS D) £4,900 added 3YO 1m 100yds (C-000 BLOOD GRANGE (31) G Mangarson 90
2 BONGO (214) C Thomban 90
3 (00222 FAVIK (16) A Memoration 90
4 66-3 OTHER CLUB (31) J Eder 90
5 662 ANELYST (54) J Mcs. 89
5 003450 PATINA (20) R Hichartman 89
6 dackard -- 6 declared

BETTING: 7-4 Ahlayat, 3-1 Faylk. 7-2 Other Chub, 4-1 Bongo. 16-1 Pati-

2.15 CHRISTMAS PUDDING CLAIMING STAKES (CLASS F) £3,300 2YO 61 635000 COMEOUTOFTHEFOG (111) D Present Dave & G . S Drowne : 404(20) FROUCKING (35) N LETTOR 8 8 COSCO MIGHT AUCTION (4) 2 Fairs 9.4 COSCO STRAVSEA (142) 6 Earch 6.4 COSCO MAGGICE (20) 6 Horistead 6.2 — T Williams

- 9 distand -BETTING: 15-8 Fruicking, 9-2 Night Austion, 13-2 Treacle Jones, Stransen, Just For This, 8-1 Touchanova, 10-1 Politydau, 16-1 others

2.45 CHRIS MASSEY'S BIRTHDAY HANDI-CAP (CLASS E) (DIV II) £4,025 61

Manmum weight: 7st 10th. The Branticap weight: River Energy 7st 9th. BETTING: 3-1 Eastern Prophets. 5-1 Elite Hope, 11-2 Italian Symph ny, 7-1 Redoubtable, Corniche Quest, 8-1 River Ensign, 10-1 others

3.15 HAGUE FASTENERS HANDICAP (CLASS C) £7,325 added 1m 100yds 00649 LIONIZE (22) (D) Mr J Cec 4 9 n W Ryan 4 B
36min DEMOCRAT (13) (C) (D) Sr M Precott 3 9 3 G Duffeld 7
0-0005 QUEEN'S PAGEANT (27) J Spearing 3 9 2 S Drowne 8
420003 SILK ST JOHN (18) (D) M Ryan 3 8 6 F Lymch 6
62001 BENTICO (8) (CD) Mr N Macauley 8 9 4 (Sen) D Biggs 2 V
000200 CEE-N-K (14) (D) M Johnston 3 8 3 1 Grandfam (7) 5 B
000200 THREE ARCH BRIDGE (14) (D) M Johnston 5 B 2 000200 CEE-N-K (14) (D) M Johnston 3.8.3 (Granth 01020 THREE ARCH BRIDGE (14) (D) M Johnston 5.8.2

9 023035 ENCHANTING EVE (16) (C) (D) C Alen 3 7 1) Martin Dayer - 9 Sectand -BETTING: 15-8 Democrat. 9-2 Lioniza. 5-1 Silk St John, 13-2 Sualisch 8-1 Queen's Pageant. Bentico. 10-1 Cee-N-K, 12-1 others 3.50 TURKEY SELLING STAKES (CLASS G) £2,875 added 1 m 4f

24003 REX.MUNDI (20) (CD) P.Excns 5.9 12. A McCarthy (7) 8 V -00107 RED PHANTOM (437) (C) (D) S.Mefor 5.9 8. M Wigstem 1.9 -325-02 PEARL ANNIVERSARY (49) (CD) Miss S.Witon 4.9 4 M Martin Dwyer 2
4 530000 HEAD GARDENER (18) N Littroden 3 9 3 5 Whitworth 5 V
5 245-23 SKELTON SOVEREIGN (13) (CD) R Holinshead 3 9 3

5-904 SIBOR STAR (239) D Burchel 3 8 13 46000 SWISS COAST (LISS) R Juckes 3 8 to 40000 BLAZER'S BABY (LISS) Mr SN Macauley 3 8 to 000004 SIDNEY THE KIDNEY (18) M Ryan 3 6 8 3 A Culhane 41 10 340606 TABASCO JAZZ (20) 8 Medium 3 8 8 - 10 declared -BETTING: 3-1 Rox Mundi, 7-2 Skelton Soversign, 5-1 Pearl Anniversar, 7-1 Haad Gardenez Tabasco Jazz, 8-1 Red Phantom, 10-1 others

4.20 PARSONS' NOSE HANDICAP (CLASS F) (DIV I) £3,300 added 1m 1f 79yds

- 11 declared - SETTING: 4-1 Muara Bay, 9-2 Queens Stroller, 11-2 Gablesea, 13-2 Heath-yards Lady, 7-1 Soldler Cove, Colles Choice, 8-1 Failed To HR, 12-1 others

4.50 PARSONS' NOSE HANDICAP (CLASS F) (DIV II) £3,300 added 1m 1f 79yds

HUNTINGDON

12.30 The Toiseach 1.00 Garethson 1.30 Ernest William 2.00 High Learle 2.30 Edmond 3.00 Fenwick's Brother 3.30 Sunuvugun Cearlie 2.30 Commond 3.00 Perinvick's Evidence Control College (Conse is at junction of A1 and A804 ADMISSION: Members £12; Peddock £8 Course 54 CAR PARK: Picnic area £1; rest free.

■ LEADING TRAINERS: K Beiley 22-89 (33.3%), J Gifford 16-72 (22.2%), G Habbain 3-61 (21.3%), N Henderson 11-38 (28.9%).

■ LEADING JOCKEYS: N Williamson 15-70 (21.4%), M Breman 7-51 (13.7%), J A McCarthy 6-38 (15.8%), R Thornton 5-15 (33.3%).

■ FAVOURITIES: 211 wins in 489 reces (43.1%).

BLINKERED FIRST TIME: Physical Run (2.30).

12.30 CHRISTMAS NOVICE CHASE (CLASS E) (DIV I) £4,079 added 2m 4f 110yds added 2m 4f 110yds

1 22-n The TOISEACH (17) (2D) 1 Farshame 6 ft 5 _____

2 3631-P GEMMA'S WAGER (38) (7) M Campon 7 ft 0 ____

3 26234 6-37-1 DOMINOS RING (322) Mrs H Waton 8 ft 12 _____

4 6-37-1 HARLEQUIN CHORUS (15) Mrs J Parcen 7 ft 2 _____

5 620/ HE FLES BY NGRIT (1018) Mrs H Kright 8 ft 12 _____

7 FPP-3P BNOR KEY (15) J Jerkins 7 ft 12 _____

9 (06-05 RISING MAN (31) J Gifford 6 ft 12 _____

9 (06-05 RISING MAN (31) J Gifford 6 ft 12 _____

10 0612-2 STEAUCHT ON (15) Mrs D Hains 6 ft 12 _____

10 declared —

BETTING: 9-4 Heriequin Chorus, 5-2 The Toiseach, 11-2 Straight

Gesome's Wager, 14-1 Dominon Ring, He Flee By Night, Inch Chass ...Nr A Walks

Ŀ	1.00	CHRISTMAS NOVICE CHASE (CLASS E) (E 24,075 added 2m 4f 110yds)[V
1	423-16	MARIUS (29) J GHOTO 7 TI 5	Aspell
2	PPSP-0	BALLYMICHAEL (36) G Baiding 5 10 12	
3	F2433-	BRIDGE END (285) K F Cutterbuck 6 to 12	Later to
4	04-222	EIRESPRAY (23) (BF) Mrs S Smith 8 10 12	ineon :
5	50	EIRESPRAY (23) (8F) Mrs S Smith 6 10 12	Me Car
5	/3233-	GARETHSON (284) (BF) Miss H Knight 5 to 12	JFT
7	3-123	OCCOLD (25) (BF) G Hubbard 6 to 12	
8	0331-3	SELATAN (28) (D) D Gandolfo 5 to 12M	
9	1-	SHADRACH (272) (D) Mrs H Mobiley 8 to 12	ci wa
O	144230	SHADRACH (272) (D) Mrs H Mobiley 6 10 12	agy (3)
		- 10 declared -	,,

BETTING: 9-2 Martus, Garethson, Occold, Shadrach, 6-1 Eirespray, Selatan, 10-1 Ballymichael,

1.30 CHRISTMAS HANDICAP HURDLE (CLASS F) 22,575 added 2m 5f 110ydsMiss C Dvs

Unman weight: 10st True handicap weight: Emaken 8st 5b.
BETTING: 11-4 The Brewer, 6-1 Ring For Rosle, Emest William, 7-1 Cambo, 8-1 Maie Brecknei
Don't Tell Tom, Lime Street Blues, Silghtly Special, 14-1 officers 2.00 BEDFORD LODGE HOTEL HANDICAP CHASE (CLASS E) \$4,075 added 3m

Movement weight: 10st True weights: Wor No Gin 9st 13th, Black Statement Set 5th, Ryton Run 9st 3th, BETTING: 7-2 Genre Lad, 4-1 Ocean Leader, 5-1 High Learle, 13-2 Some Day Soon, Black Statement, 8-1 Karenastino. 10-1 Stage Player, Paviova, 14-1 others 2.30 FESTIVE SPIRIT NOVICE HURDLE (CLASS E) 52,925

2.3U added 3m 2f

1 60.1 POLO RIDGE (60) O Sherwood 5 11 5

5 BALLYHARRY (25) P Winkworth 7 10 2. Laped (3)

4 0.2 CARAS ROSE (48) Mrs J Pitran 5 10 2. Laped (3)

5 0F-0P CONCUERT THE KILT (2) J Mairs 6 10 12. S Current

6 00 COTTESMORE (346) Mrs A Johnson 6 10 2. Lamenoot

7 2.3F EDMOND (FR) (30) (8F) T Forsier 5 10 12. R Thomston

6 6393 JAVELIN COOL (6) G Hibbard 6 10 12. R Eidem (7)

10 33-4RP PHYSICAL FUN (2) A Backwore 6 10 12. R Eidem (7)

11 POD PURE AIR (6) Mrs C Hots 5 10 12. R Balkwore

12 3 CUITTE LIVELY (36) K Baley 5 10 12. R Balkwore

13 66-13 WISLEY WARRIOR (65) N Resident 5 10 12. R Balkwore

14 36-50 ANDE-BRAR (3) J W Payne 5 10 7. Wislesmore

15 65-50 ANDE-BRAR (3) J W Payne 5 10 7. Wislesmore

16 50-50 ANDE-BRAR (3) J W Payne 5 10 7. Wislesmore

17 5 10:51 SPERRN VIEW (200) 4th 5 th Mothey 11 10 7. Wislesmore

18 BETTING 2-1 Edmond, 9-2 Polo Ridge, 11-2 Quille Lively, 13-2 Mordecol, 8-1 Barray Hit Lad, Caras Rose, Wisley Warrior, 26-1 others

3.00 BOXING DAY HANDICAP CHASE (CLASS F) 63.475 added 2m 110yds | Second | S

SETTING: 7-4 Aufourn Boy, 3-1 Ferminsk's Brothes, 7-2 Pensian Elite, 5-1 Sleezey, 12-1 Days Of Thunder, 16-1 Absolute Limit, Nahia, 20-1 Alcove added 2m 110yds

3.30 MISTLETOE OPEN NH FLAT RACE (CLASS H) 21,500 ADGEC 27TI 1 TUYCIS

AMERICAN STYLE MES! McKle 5 ft 4

COLTIBULOND (120) M Bracksock 5 ft 4

COLOMANYSON N Babbage 4 ft 4

HULK (AUS) M Wilkinson 6 ft 4

IN THE YAN (21) Mrs D Heine 5 ft 4

JET SPECIALS (307) Mrs J Pienes 4 ft 4

MEJTON MADE (230) G Hubbard 4 ft 4

RATAGAN M Gradenck 5 ft 4 . . D Leads RATAGAN M Pactoret 5 74 4

RUNNING WATER P Hadge 4 11 4

RUNNING WATER P Hadge 4 11 4

SALFORD CHAY (17) Mrs J Pargen 4 11 4

SEVEN O SEVEN P CANCEL 4 11 4

SURRIVARGIN O SPENNONS 5 14 4 SEVEN O SEVEN P LUNCES 4 TI 4.

SIRAL/MIGUN O SYGNIDOS 5 TI 4.

ACHEL RAMBLER (22) (BF) D Nordeon 4 TO TS.

BY P Congrave (7)

COLMARANN Mrs S Strin 5 TO TS.

P Morris (6) COLMARANN MYS S SYITE 5 TO 15

JEANARN K MOTOR A TO 13

STRONG SPICE (6) Mrs C Holes 6 TO 13

THE CAPTAIN'S LADY (37) D Mcholeon 5 TO 13

R Massey (3)

18 declared —

BETTING: 3-1 Sunuvugun, 6-1 in The Van, The Captair's Lady, 7-1 Mystere, 8-1 Jet Specials, 10-1 Selford Cury, 14-1 American Style, Go-omnyson, Metton Made, Colourann, 20-1 others

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SECUNG DAY HOVEL IN CLASS DI CLASS DI CASS DI CONTRACTOR DE LA CONTRACTOR DE L

STOLE (CLASS C) ESAME A PRINCIPAL OF THE PRIN

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KEMPTON

HYPERION 12,40 Zarelaska 1.10 Flddling The Facts 2.20 Suny Bay 2.55 Lake Kariba 1.45 Serenus

GOBNG: Good to Soft. GORNIC GOOS to Sort.

B Right-hand course, Practically flat. Run-in of 200yd.

Course is on A308 at Sunbury. (Bus link from Richmond Underground station.) AD-MISSION: Club 527, Juniors (16 to 25-year-olds) £14; Grandstand £16; Saver Ring £7. Accompanied children under 16 free. CAR PARIC Members £5 (limited and must be

pre-booked); remainder, free.

© LEADING TRAINERS: D Nicholson — 19 winners from 69 runners gives a success ratio of 275%; N Henderson 11 from 72 (153%); M Pipe 10 from 50 (20%); J Gifford 9 from 77 (117%).

• LEADING LOCKEYS: A Maguire 25 wins from 95 rides gives a success ratio of 26.3%;

III A Fizzperald 88 from 103 (17.5%); R Duswoody 15 from 85 (17.6%); A P McCoy 9 from

65 (138%). ● FAVOURITES: 117 wins in 288 races (40.6%). BLINKERED PIRST TIME: None.

12.40 PERTEMPS CATERING NOVICE HURDLE (CLASS B) \$10,000 added 2m Penalty Value \$6,938 2 ZARALASKA (22) (D) (BF) (Lady Hams) D Nicholson 6 m 10......... Meuve & yellow check, yellow steeres BARON FERDINAND (PSG) (Ludy Rothschild) R Charlton 7 1t 5... oyel blue, white hoops, red steeres & cap 58-65 MONTROE (21) (Mass Merist Turnell) R Rome 5 tl 5...

BETTING: 4-6 Zarakaska, 11-2 Better Offer, Shehmur, 13-2 Beron Ferdinand, 16-1 Erintente, 20-1 Montroe, 25-1 Flying On

BETTIME 45 Zaranson, 11% conservation, Indiano, 18 sen
Montree, 25-1 Flying On
1998: Standardno 4 11 5 A Maguire 10-3 (D Nichobon) 8 sen
PORM GHIDE
Classy sox-Plet handicapper ZARALASIKA could handly have been more impressive when
atoming by 11 langths on his hunding debut at Ascott and the slow pace was responsible for
him being bester firmed parts of a langth by Wahiba Sands when 5-1 on at Laicester. Wahihis Sands followed up at Ascott and Zaraiseira is expected to return to warning form, though
it might not be easy with Better Office, hat-trick seelers Shaintur and interesting jumping retrict Beron Ferdinand under orders. Better Office, unother former smart handicapper on the
level, troited up on his funding bow at Huntrajdon last month and was long odds-on next
fine when finding George Bull a neck too good at Windsor. Baron Ferdinand won the times
on the Fast, including a length delegt of Captain Horatius in the Scottish Classic at Ayr in
1995.

1.10 PERTEMPS FELTHAM NOVICE CHASE (GRADE 1) (CLASS A) £35,000 3m Penalty Value £21,310 1/22 BENDERS MOOR (21) (0) UR Townshand, P Nichols 6 ft 7 _____ R Dunwoody

4222 OTTOWA (15) (D) (EF) (P Barber) P Nicholis 7 th 7.

Dert green, white chemon, Spit green steres, dark green & white check cap
12-mi PENTLANDS FLYER (44) (this M W Bird) J H Johnson 6 th 7.

Purple & white (halved), purple steres, shiped cap
13-P1F SHERELS (61) (C) (Liplands Bloodsock) C Brooks 6 th 7.

- 7 declared BETTING: 7-4 Forest Ivory, 9-2 Fiddling The Facts, 6-1 Bangers Moor, Ottown, Pentlends Flyer, 7-1 Steinets, 8-1 Eulogy 1996: Djeddah 5 11 7 A Kondrat 8-2 (F Doumer, Fr) 5 ran

FORM GUIDE
FOREST WORY has taken kindly to crasing and can complete a hast-trick. David Nicholson's runner, who wound up last season with a short-head victory in a three-mile nurdle at Antrea, toppled over two out on his fencing bow in Northern Startight's race at Chepatow but has been an impressive winner of both starts since - at Watherby and Bangor - and there is before still be come. He represents the stable in preference to Escartefique. Ottown overcame a long absence to stam Eufogy a dozen lengthe at Worcester last month and the runner-up is no better off. However, Ottawa was beaten three and a half lengths by Fiddling

The Facts at Lingfield next time and Nick Henderson's socyes-old, who was not only having his first run since the spring but was also making his chasing debut on that occasion, can confirm superiority on 7th worse terms. Northern ballenger Pentiande Plyer jumps well and is undelected direct three chases – at Perth, Carliste and Kelso. He has had a different risks each time and again has a new partner in forty McCoy, Howard Johnson's runner has more on the plate this time but will not be far away Wimming point-to-pointer. Bengars Nicor, a stablemate of Ottawa, made en encouraging debut over regulation fences when beaten a length and three-quarriers by Wise King at Sandown, Shelsels made of on his cheang debut over an extended two and a risk miles here before failing two out when holding we every chance in Tullymurry Toffs race at Challenham, Selection: FOREST (VORY)

1.45 NETWORK PERSONNEL HANDICAP HURDLE C4 (CLASS B) £10,000 2m Penalty Value £6,575

Stack, emerate green chayons, surped sleeves, black cap
1760-1 SERENUS (17) (0) (W V M W & Mrs & S Robins) N Henderson 4 10 12 M A Fitographic
Orange, black equatios, black & Grange surped sleeves, black cap, campe ster
FISM NOBLE COLOURS (14) (0) (5 Gritists) S Gritists 4 10 0 O Gallegher Black, white hoops, black sleeves, emeretel green & white questered cap - & declared -

BETTING: 5-2 Seranus, Tibetum, 5-1 Secret Spring, 7-1 Doctoor, Kingsfold Pet, 12-1 Noble Colours, 14-1 Silver Grount, 20-1 Bless Me States 1998: Albemine 7 10 10 T Kent 6-4 law (Mas J Cooli) 4 ran
FORMI GUEDE
SECRET SPRING comes here after a recent run on the Figt when he started tayounte but

SECRET SPRING comes here after a recent run on the Flat when he started teacurate but missed the breat on the Lingheld Equitrect. Peter Hedger's charge finished well beaten at Chelantham last month on his first run over timber since failing at Ascot in April. However, Secret Spring did score twice last season – at Windsor and over course and distance – and also ren second twice. He can come good again this time. Secret Spring might have most to fear from Tibetain, who comes here in cracking form efter wins at Huntingdon and Chelantham. Noble Colours, a Yelength fourth at Chelantham, is held on 6th better terms, while Doctoor, who want off lawourite, was talked off when pushed up before the last and the binkers he wore for the first time there are dispensed with here. Secentia, from the in-form Nick Henderson yard, had been of the head since March when going in at Huntingdon despite being a bad drifter in the betting and must be kept on the right side. Shere Groons, is only 25 lower than wall beaten in the William Hill Hundle at Sendown. Kingefold Pet returns to hundling after a remote second to Kadastrof on his femang debut here.

Selections SECRET SPRING

2.20 PERTEMPS KING GEORGE VI CHASE (GRADE C4
1) (CLASS A) £100,000 3m Penalty Value £60,980 21F-22 BARTON BANK (27) (CD) (Mrs J Mould) D Nicholson 1) 11 D. A Magains Emerald green, white stars, emerald green cap, white star 54-222 CHALLENGER DU LUC (FR) (15) (D) (D A Johnson) M Pipe 7 ft 10. A P McCoy B Navy blue, green sash, cense cap 22F-31 SEE MORE BUSINESS (20) (D) (J Keighley/P Barber) P Nichols 7 til 10A Thornton Black, yallow stars, black steeves, white armiets, yallow cap SENOR BL BETRUTTI (13) (D) (Gerard Nock) Mirs S Nock 6 til 10 C Lientellyn

Black, red chevron, hooped cap ~ 9 declared -SETTING: 11-8 One Man, 9-4 Suny Bay, 5-1 Barton Bank, 8-1 Rough Quest, 16-1 Challenger Du Luc, See More Business, Sanor El Retrutti, 33-1 Djeddeh, 100-1 Yorkshire Gale

Liuc, See More Business, Senor El Battutti, 33-1 Djeddeh, 100-1 Yorkshire Gate
1986: One Man 8 11 to R Durwoody 8-13 tay (G Richards) 5 ran
FORMI GUIDE
Reported better than ever. ONE MAN is poised to follow in the footsteps of Wayward Lad
and Desert Orchid, who both landed this prestigious prize there times - the last named
going on to make it four. Gordon Richards' grey came home by 14 lengths from Monsieur
Le Cure when the race was switched to Sandown two seasons ago - Barton Bank pulled
up before two out - and scored by 12 lengths and rine lengths from Rough Quest and
Barton Bank test term. Barton Bank, who won this in 1964, was clear only to blunder badly and unseat at the last a year later - presenting the race to Algan - and he chased home
Sany Bay at 13 lengths in the Hennessy last time. Yorkshire Gale and Djeddeh were both

pulled up in that event. One Man has finished tired in the last two Cheltenham Gold Cups in which Barton Bank was fourth and second but the selection beat David Nichelson's Charge at Cheltenham - his bropey course - in January and in the Pattern Chase at Weinhelty on his return. He should do so agan. One Man went on to deriver Viding Ragship nine lengths in the Peterborough Chase over an inadequate two and a half at Humbrigdon last month Rough Quest, second in the 1995 Gold Cup, was having his first race since lest year's King George when numming very well to first in ask-length second to One Man's stablement The Grey Monk at Haydock and must progress for the nun. Even so, to the forecast Suny Bay is preterred. Charle Brookes' charge, who wound up last term with a line effort to finish numer-up in the Grand National, was having his first run since when winning at Indydock last month - See More Business an 18 length thad - and justified favouritism in great style in the Hermissy, grinting a 13-length charmoning to Banton Bank (only 5th better). Senior El Betrutti pulled of the Murphy's-Triplephint Gold Cup double, each time with Challenger Du Luc numer-up, but his ability to cope with some of these at levels is in double.

2.55 NETWORK DESIGN INTERNATIONAL NOVICE C4 Dark blue & red (quartered), halved steeree

D30F4 INTERMAGIC (235) (D) (J C For) J For 7 ti Q.

Alative, misroon sears, missed steeree, missed steeree

O1642 JOHN DRUBBI (27) (D) (Anchew Jenkins) P Webber & 11 0...

Yellow, emeralid green hoops & emissis, yellow cap

2-32F3 ZABADI (15) (CD) (BP) (Lady Harris) D Nicholson & 11 0...

Alanne & yellow check, yellow sleeves.

— 6 declared —

SETTING: 7-4 Kadestref, 5-2 Lake Kerlba, 7-2 Zebadi, 5-1 John Oramus, 8-1 Asablesida, 16-1 in ermagec 1998: no corresponding race FORM GUIDE

FORM GUIDE

The ground was not soft enough for Liele Kariba when he was beginn more than three lengths by Chief's Song on his chasing debut here in October but he is unbeatien in three starts since – at Newton Abbot, Chepstow and Uttosteir, Even so, KADASTRIOF comes here with the same record, tollowing a fencing-bow second behind Wide Music with viones over course and distance, Werwick and Ludlow. A great stable two-urite – he has been with Robin Diction since his winning juvenile days – Katlastrof is only 2b worse in with John Drusmin than when beating him seven lengths at Warwick and he can complete the four-timer. Zabadi has been disappointing over fences but is only rising six and will improve enough to find a similar event in due course. He is 8th better in with Lake Kariba than when beatien 12 lengths by Paul Nicholisis charge at Newton Abbot last month.

3.25 PERTEMPS DESIGNER HANDICAP HURDLE (CLASS B) £10,000 added 3m 110yds Penalty Value £6,507

Beige & emerald green check, beige seeves 1-2122 DECYSORIG (FR) (25) (II) (BF) (Terry Neil) M Pipe 6 10 0

White, large red spots & armiets, quenered cap - 6 declared -Minimum: 10st. True handicup weights: Cition Set is 12tb, Toby Brown 9st 9tb, Decytiong 9st 3tb. BETTING: 5-4 Dannydam, 5-2 Friendship, 11-2 Toby Brown, 7-1 Helia Denring, 8-1 Cition Set, 12-1

1996: Tim 6 10 8 M A Fitzgerald 7-2 (J Jankins) 5 ran
FORBA GUIDE
An interesting affair between Friendship and DARAYDAN and the latter might have the edge
despite having to concede his rival 18th. Friendship, from the in-form Nick Henderson stable,
landed a Wordester bumper the season before last and secret fusion was visible. despite having to concede his rival 18th. Financiship, from the in-form Nick Handerson stable, landed at Worsessar bumper the season before last and scored (wice over timber in 1966-97, while he has a 100 per cent record this term — winning over two miles five furions here and over a furioning further at Sandown. The longer mp will pose no problems. That last remark also applies to Deraydan (a good stayer on the Flat), who wound up last season successfully at Ascot and is also unbeatien this term – going in at Chetterham (twice) and at Newbury in between Martin Pipois five-year-old put up a time display to beat Mightly Moss — who had finished three parts of a length in trant of him when they were eacond and thrid behind istabriaq in the Royal SunAlliance Hurdle at the Chettenham Festival – four lengths on his most recent appearance. Haille Derring was a useful type last season with wire at Cariste, Haydock, Ultroster and Ascot and he ran tourth of a big field behind Phramaer in the Gold Card Hurdle Final at the Chettenham Festival. Nigel Twiston-Davles' runner has weakened towards the finish in both attampts this term but would pose a threat theck near his best. Clitton Set finished six lengths in front of Haile Derring when they were second — at 11 lengths and tourth to Name Of Our Fether at Ascot last month but Helle Derring can turn that around with his 5th pul.

FP-P4 JOCTOR DON (173 J S Moore S 1) 6

BETTING: 7-4 Iranos, 9-4 Welsh Silk, 6-1 Bold Rossec Lady, 8-1 Joctor Don, 10-1 Never in Debt, 20-1 others

3.00 LANGSTONE CLIFF HOTEL HANDICAP CHASE (CLASS D) £4,950 3m 2f 110yds

03P-2U PENINCALER (21) P Hobbs 7 10 5 G Treasure P

- 8 declared

BETTING: 5-2 Miss Diskin, Hold Your Ramks, 9-2 Penneales, 11-2 Alia George, 7-1 Brambiehill Buck, 12-1 Nezzaro, Plan-A, 18-1 Silverino

3.30 WHY NOT EMAIL: NARACE-

CLASS E) 14,075 Robed 211 Tryots
6:1FQ THURSDAY NIGHT (11) (C) Pichols 6:120_Mr J Tezand (5)
03-244 AMBLESIDE (20) (D) (BF) Mr S Williams 6:19 - J. Power (7)
443-P2 COURT MASTER (10) (CD) R Buckler 9:11 2 _____ B Powell
4FPG- BBALIAMN LANCASTER (20) (CD) M (Fifth 13:11 S Burrough
12,PG3 ROBINS PRIDE (11) (CD) C prohem 7:08 _____ B Robet B
9-00P MISTRESS ROSE (11) (CD) M H to 100_D J Kewningh (6) B

— 7 declared —

All the manufactured — All the manufactured — All the manufactured in
4.00 ROYAL CASTLE HOTEL NOVICE HAND-ICAP HURDLE (CLASS E) 52,925 2m 6f

Meanum weight: 10st Tue harding weight: Subah Di Balkeney Ser 3b: BETTING: 3-1 Karticleigh Boy, 7-2 Ken Risk, 5-1 Heart, Quiet Momenta. 13-2 Sparthing Buck, 7-1 Spirk Level, 3-1 Willows Routetts, 14-1 others

(CLASS E) £4,075 added 2m 110yds

PUNTERS' GUIDE FOR BOXING DAY

KEMPTON

L.10: High expectations are held this season for Forest Ivory. He jumped a little awkwardly before falling two fences from home at Chepstow on his chase debut. He then jumped more fluently to make amends at Wetherby and Bangor, If his fencing continues to improve he will prove very hard to beat. At the likely odds, however, it may be best to side with FID-DLING THE FACTS, who jumped with fine agility when she was coufidently ridden to beat Ottown by three-and-a-half lengths at Lingfield a fortnight ago. Ottowa seeks revenge, giving 7lb less today, but the mare looks a very useful recruit.

L45: The threat posed by Secret Spring is difficult to assess, Peter Hedger's hurdler is a course-anddistance winner on good to firm ground, but is something of an unmown quantity on a softer surface. On his seasonal reappearance over umps at Cheltenham last month, he did not get into the race on a course to which he is probably unwited. Back on this flat track, the five-year-old must be feared. Fewer question marks, though, surround SERENUS. This four-year-old had something in hand when catching the in-form Namoodaj at Huntingdon last time and a 5lb rise in the weights for that win is by no means harsh.

HYPERION'S TV TIPS

1.20: One Man's odds offer little value and it is worth opposing him with SUNY BAY, Graham Bradley's mount has won two highly competitive events this season by a combined total of 24 lengths and we may not have seen the best of him yet. See More Bustness and the veteran Rough Quest would come into it on really testing ground but would otherwise struggle to match the pace of the front two in the betting.

2.55: A fascinating clash between the mud-lovers LAKE KARIBA and Kadastrof, who both like to force the pace. The latter was superior to his rival over hurdles but may meet his match in Lake Karihe, who has taken extremely well to fences. Paul Nicholls's six-yearold has the additional assistance today of Richard Dunwoody, who takes over from the sideline 'Timmy Murphy. Zabadi, Adrian Maguire's mount, has yet to show he can recapture his old form. John Dramm is therefore likely to be the main beneficiary if the top two were to cut each other's throats by racing too fast in the early stages.

KING GEORGE VI CHASE - 10-YEAR-TALE 1987 88 89 90 91 92 93 94 2 1 1 1 3 7 3 U Fate of the tevourites: finner's place in belting: 0 1 1 1 0 1 2jt 0 25-1 1-2 4-8 9-4 10-1 1-1 9-2 18-1 11-4 8-13 arting prices: rolit or loss to £1 stake: Fevourites +£3.79. Second Fevourites -£7.25. centage of winners placed 1st, 2nd or 3rd in last race: 60% ortest-oriced winner: Desert Orchid 1-2 (1988) ungest-priced winner: Nupsala 25-1 (1987) B 9 10 11 6 7 7 6 B 8 hning ages: op trainer: F Douman (4) - Nupsala (1967), The Fellow (1991 & 1992), Algan (1994) Top Jockey: R Durwoody (4) - Desart Orchid (1989 & 1990). One Man (1985" & 1996) t = Joint-favourite. * weather torced 1995 race to be run at Sandown in January

FIRST SHOW

Kempton 1,45 5-2 5-2 21 52 Secret Spring 5-1 5-1 _51 Doctoor 7-1 7-1 6-1 <u> Gingstold Pet 13-2 6-1 8-1</u> Nable Colous 14-1 12-1 11-1 Silver Groom 16-1 14-1 14 1 Rese Me Sister 20-1 16-1 20-1 Each way, a filth the adult, places 7, 2, 3

C - Coral H - Wilson Hit T - Total

Surry Bey 5-2 9-4 9-4 9-4 Barton Barik 11-2 5-1 5-1 5-1 Rough Guest 9-1 9-1 8-1 6-1 See More Business 14-1 12-1 16-1 16-1 Challenger Du Luc 16-1 20-1 18-1 18-1 Senor El Betruit . 181 141 20-1 15-1 33-1 33-1 50-1 40-1 Yorkshire Gale 100-1 100-1 66-7 100-1 Each way, a little the octob, places 1, 2, 3 C - Coral H - William Hill L - Lacturoles, T - Tota

King George VI Chase

Follow Brad's advice land plunge on Bay

The former National Hunt jockey Steve 🖁 Smith Eccles (right) gives a runner-by runner analysis of Boxing Day's King George. VI Chase,



Barton Bank: Aged 11 but as See More Business: Progresat Wetherby and Suny Bay in style, but Kempton may prove test and there is no reason to suggest he can beat them.

Challenger Du Luc: Steps up to three miles after three defeats over two and a half on stiff tracks like Cheltenham. scene as he needs to be held up, but it remains to be seen whether he can produce the necessary turn of foot.

Djeddah: Gallic raider who but out of sorts this term.

emulate Desert Orchid's achievement of three consecutive King Georges, and who is to say that be will not? He showed he is at his formidable best by winning at Wetherby and Huntingdon and is the one they all have to beat. A worthy favourite.

Rough Quest: Ran a blinder on his seasonal reappearance behind The Grey Monk at Haydock and will strip fitter this time. However, I can see him being outpaced over the final three fences.

tough as old boots and not sive horse who won Chepdisgraced behind One Man stow's Rehearsal Chase in the Hennessy. He is up too sharp for a horse who against them both in this con- thrives on a galloping track.

Senor El Betrutti: Has won the Murphy's and Tripleprint Gold Cups this season, bowling along in front and jumping like a bunny rabbit. He steps up in distance and class Sure to appear late on the but will run well if the ground is not too soft.

Suny Bay: The Hennessy Gold Cup hero is the mount of my old pal Graham Bradley, who has likened him showed promise last season to Gold Cup winner Bregawn. If Brad's judgement is right, as it usually is, Suny Bay One Man: Attempting to has an excellent chance of completing a hat-trick.

> Yorkshire Gale: Won last time out but will be hard pressed to repeat that here.

> Conclusion: It is going to be a grey day, and Graham Bradley can crown a magnificent year by lowering the colours of One Man with SUNY BAY. Given decent ground, a third grey, Senor El Betrutti, will run a big race, while Challenger Du Luc may reward each-way backers.

The following horses are doubly

Pearl's Choice

1.25 Ayr 2.55 Kempton 1.15 Wetherby Lime Street Blues 1.30 Huntingd 2.35 Hereined 3.35 Market Rater Lord Hastle 3.25 Witherby 1.55 Newton Abbot 1.00 Market Rasen 3.30 Newton Abbot 1.30 Sedgefield 1.00 Market Rasen 1.30 Huntingdon

1.15 Wetherby

AYR

HYPERION 12.55 Forzair 1.25 Weish March 2.00 No Finer Man 2.35 Naughty Future 3.10 Nawtinookey 3.40 Pariah

GOING: Good to Soft

 ◆ Left-hand galloping course.
 ◆ Course is E of them on A758. ADMISSION: Cub £12; Grandstand ZZ. CAR PARK: Free.
 ◆ LEADING TRAINERS: G Richands 33-160 (20.896), Mrs M. Revoley 28-141 (199%), J. J. O'Neill 19-109 (17.4%), P. Motelth 16-125 (12.8%).

● LEADING JOCKEYS: B Storey 27-168 (16.3%). T Reed 13-121 (10.7%), R Supple 9-41 (22%), J Calleghen 8-61 (9.8%). ● FAVOURITES: 169 wine in 362 races (44.2%).

12.55 PORT 'N' BRANDY SELLING HAND-ICAP HURDLE (CLASS G) \$2,500 2m

1.25 GOOSE NOVICE CHASE (CLASS E)

24,000 added 2m

1 QSP-5 LARVIERA (18) (D) J Charlon 5 11 4 - Mr M Bradburne (5)
2 24P-0 CITADINO (259) (D) G Thomson 7 10 12 - Mr Fouter
3 50P-14 COMMON SOUND (11) (D BP) J Berday 6 10 12 - Mr McGraft (2)
4 3-005 ESCUMAN (10) G Richards 6 10 12 - B Harding
5 265-4 HAM NESOS (10) (D) M Harmond 6 10 12 - 2nd part
6 SPIPP PATTER MERCHANT (285) MRS L Russel 6 10 12 D Reid (7)
7 22,1603 TEELWYWAITCH (10) (CD) J Golde 5 10 12 - S Taylor (5)
8 23-22 WELSH MARCH (19) (ED) J Golde 5 10 12 - S Taylor (5)
9 0-2500 FAME AND FANTASY (29) (D) A Whitens 6 10 7 - A S Smith
- B doctared BETTING: 5-2 Weigh March, 7-2 Ham N'Egga, 5-1 Catadiano, 6-1 La Rivlera, Common Sound, Teojoy'n sitch, 12-1 Enquireau, 20-1 others

12.45 Glenbower (nb).15 Ham N'Eggs 1.50 New

inn 2.25 Sparky Gayle 2.55 Cumbrian Challenge

Left-hand; sharp undutating course. Purt-in of 200yds.
 Course is SE of town on S2028. Lingdeld station (served by London, Victoria) adjoins course. ADMISSION: Members £13, Tatteralls £9, Course £3 (OAPS £2). Accompanied under £8s free.

CAR PARK: From

LEADING TRAINERS: G L Moore 9-33 (273%) M Pipe 9-48 (185%).

■ LEADING JORGEN Tulston-Davies 7-31 (225%), A Turnell 9-28 (125%),

■ LEADING JOCKEYS: C Llearedlyn 4-24 (127%), J R Kystanegh
4-34 (125%), D Gelligher 4-52 (127%), M Richards 4-76 (54%).

■ FAVOURITES: 150-332 (452%).

BLINKERED FIRST TIME: None.

12.45 BOXING DAY NOVICE HANDICAP HDLE (CLASS D) 53,650 2m 4f 110yds

WETHERBY

3.25 Foundry Lane

GOING: Good to Soft.

2.00 HOURSTONS OF AYR WINTER SALE NOVICE H'DLE (CLASS E) £3,000 2m 4f HIRT LODGE J Dison 6 10 9 _____ Jurdine (7) 00-6 PEAK A BOO (16) D Writtens 6 10.7...... S Taylor (5)

-7 declared -BETTING: 5-4 No Finer Men, 5-2 Hopeful Lord, 3-1 Polar King, 10-1 Sas-by Jokes, 14-1 Tholies Bible, 33-1 others

2.35 ALADDIN AT THE GAIETY HANDICAP CHASE (CLASS D) £5,000 added 3m 1f PPO-20 BETTER TIMES AHEAD (13) (CD) G Roberts T 120 B Harding 1FB4 JUDICIOUS CAPTAIN (41) (C) Mrs J Store 10 to 10 Mrs C Sto

BETTING: 2-1 Better Times Aheed, 5-2 Yeaughty Future, 4-1 Seeking Gold, Judicious Captain, 8-1 Shiring Fountain, 20-1 Hag's Way, 33-1 Peter

3.10 TEXSTYLE WORLD SALE NOVICE H'CAP CHASE (CLASS E) £4,000 2m 4f 14-23 RACHARL'S OWEN (16) (D BR) J Goldin 7 ft 10_R McGreth (3)

- 6 declared -BETTING: evens Master Bavard, 5-2 Sologists, 11-2 Rectase's Owen, 8-1 Music Biliz, 14-1 True Scot, Newtinookey

3.40 WHISKY MAC HANDICAP HURDLE (CLASS D) £4,000 added 2m 4f 0303-2 PALACEGATE KING (16) A Whitens B 11 13 S Taylor (5) 105-3 ROSSEL (USA) (46) (C) P Nometh 4 11 8 J Jardine (7) 108-45 PARSAH (16) (D) M Tochmer 8 10 7 J Calleghan 195-89 MENSHAAR (USA) (25) L Lungo 5 10 1 W Dowling (7) 634/2- BELLS HELL LAD (406) J Berday 10 10 0 R McGrath (2)

 5 declared – Minimum weight: 10st. True handisap weight: Bells Hill Lad St. 12b. BETTING: 2-1 Palacegate King, 9-4 Rosset, 3-1 Parish, 5-1 Memahast, 8-1 Bells Hill Lad

WINCANTON

2.25 ROWLAND MEYRICK HANDICAP CHASE (CLASS B) \$20,000 3m 1f

BÉTTDIG: 15-8 New Inn, 9-4 Dr Bones, 4-1 House Of Dreems. 7-1 Stash Tru Cash, 8-1 Kaltati, Semanid

1111-4 SPARKY GAYLE (41) (BF) C Perfer 7 11 11 ... B Storey
3US-3 AVRO ANSON (14) M Carmacto 9 11 7 ... P Niven
332-04 MAJOR BELL (13) (D) A Whitens 9 11 1 I. Wyer
4-211 STRATH ROYAL (20) (CU) O Brennan 11 10 10 ... M Brennan 211-2 COLONEL IN CHIEF (20) (CD) G Richards 7 to 4 _ P Carberry -5 declared -

BETTING: 2-1 Colonel in Chiet, 11-4 Sparky Gayle, 4-1 Major Bell, 9-2 Avro Ameon, Streth Royal

2.55 SUPERMASTER HANDICAP CHASE (CLASS B) £10,000 added 2m 4f 110yds 1 53F08 ANDENT SCOUT (11) (D) Mrs S Smith 5 in 10 IN Bendley
1 F02F-1 JOE SHAW (28) Mrs M Reveloy 4 in 5 ... IN Bendley
2 F02F-1 JOE SHAW (28) Mrs M Reveloy 4 in 5 ... IN C BROWN (3)
4 50-28 LENGUES PROSPECT (29) (D) J J O'NAIR 6 in 5 ... P Carbarry
5 ISD22 COTTAGE CRAFT (77) W Bethel 6 in 0 ... M Moloney
6 MSS38 LEAP IN THE DARK (15) (D) Mss L Social 8 in 11 ... T Held
7 F1223-0 ARROGANT HER (14) D H BROWN 4 in 7 in Mrs Durack (7)
8 OSSP SAM CHAMPACINE (24) T Easterly 5 in 9 ... L Wyse
9 /6304 MNSAYSI (18) N Mason 7 in 7 ... M Stremmen
1 DOSSP SECOND FIDULE (6) O Genrien 7 in 7 ... M Brownen
1 DOSSP SECOND FIDULE (6) O Genrien 7 in 7 ... M Brownen
1 DOSSP SECOND FIDULE (6) O Genrien 7 in 7 ... M Brownen
1 DOSSP SECOND FIDULE (6) O Genrien 7 in 7 ... M Brownen
1 DOSSP SECOND FIDULE (6) O Genrien 7 in M Hamily (7)
1 DOSSP SECOND FIDULE (6) O Genrien 7 in M Hamily (7)
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2 DOSSP SECOND FIDULE (6) O Genrien 7 in M Hamily (7)
2 DOSSP SECOND FIDULE (6) O Genrien 7 in M Hamily (7)
3 GOGON CHAM MOVE (71) W Smith 5 in D... M Hamily (7)
3 GOGON CHAM MOVE (71) W Smith 5 in D... M Hamily (7)
4 DOSSP SECOND FIDULE (8) O GENRIE FIRM SECOND JOE Shaw, Bell Manual Propagal (7)
4 DOSSP SECOND FIDULE (8) O GENRIE FIRM SECOND JOE Shaw, Bell Manual Propagal (7)
4 DOSSP SECOND FIDULE (8) O GENRIE FIRM SECOND JOE Shaw, Bell Manual Propagal (7)
4 DOSSP SECOND FIDULE (8) O GENRIE SECOND JOE Shaw, Bell Manual Propagal (7)
4 DOSSP SECOND FIDULE (8) O GENRIE FIRM SECOND JOE Shaw, Bell Manual Propagal (7)
4 DOSSP SECOND FIDULE (8) O GENRIE FIRM SECOND JOE SHAW, BELL MANUAL PROPAGAL (7) 23-405 ROYAL MOUNTBROWNE (13) (D) Was M Rowland 9 TI 10 4-6m CLAMERIAN CHALLENGE (20) (CD) T Esserby 8 to 13 L Wyer 224-3 CHEF MANSTER (40) (C D BF) M 1-4mmort 5 to 8 R Gambly 230- WHSPERMS STSEL (259) (G 6 Richards to 10 8. B Stony 15/32- MORTHANTS (308) (C) (D) W Screy 11 1/2 0 ... M Moloney 25/323 BRAMBLEBERRY (9) (C) (D) W 5 Smith 8 10 1. P Carbony - 8 declared -

46 declared - 98 lib. Bernbleberry iss 120 BETTNIG: 11-8 Cambridge Challenge, 3-1 Chief Minister, 9-2 Wrispering Steel, 13-2 Northante, 7-1 Brambleberry, 10-1 Royal Moonthrowne

3.25 CHRISTMAS NOVICE HURDLE (CLASS D) 23,650 added 2m

Minimum: Not. True handlesp stegics: Eliand Set 10th, Chan Move first St.

SETTING: 8-1 Glandbower, Primitive Heart, 6-1 Ardent Scout, Joe Stane,
8-1 Jensie's Prospect, Leep in The Dark, Second Fiddle, 10-1 others
8-1 Jensie's Prospect, Leep in The Dark, Second Fiddle, 10-1 others
9-1 Jensie's Prospect, Leep in The Dark, Second Fiddle, 10-1 others
9-1 Jensie's Prospect, Leep in The Dark, Second Fiddle, 10-1 others
9-1 Jensie's Prospect, Leep in The Dark, Second Fiddle, 10-1 others
9-1 Jensie's Prospect, Leep in The Dark, Second Fiddle, 10-1 others
9-1 Jensie's Prospect, Leep in The Dark, Second Fiddle, 10-1 others
9-1 Jensie's Prospect, Leep in The Dark, Second Fiddle, 10-1 others
9-1 Jensie's Prospect, Leep in The Dark, Second Fiddle, 10-1 others
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9-1 Jensie's Prospect, Leep in The Dark Second Fiddle, 10-1 others
9-1 Jensie's Prospect, Leep in The Dark Second Fiddle, 10-1 others
9-1 Jensie's Prospect Second Fiddle, 10-1 others
9-1

NEWTON ABBOT HYPERION

1.25 Kasterlee 1.55 Sparkling Cone 2.30 Iranos 3.00 Miss Diskin 3.30 Ambleside 4.00 Ken Risk

GOING: Heavy.

© Left-hand, sharp, course with short run-in.

© Course is N of town on A380. ADMISSION: Textersalis £10; Course £5. Under-tils tree. CAR PARK: On rais £150, rest tree.

© LEADING TRAINERS: M Pipe 103-357 (285%), P Hobbs £2-171; 304%), P Nicholis 36-141 (255%), R Frost £2-233 (89%).

© LEADING JOCKEYS: N Williamson 14-54 (259%), B Powell 14-182 (77%), G Tormey 7-43 (163%), S Burrough 7-88 (8%).

FAVOURITES: 204-804 (438%), BLINKERED FIRST TIME: Mistress Rosie (330), Ken Risk (400).

1.25 THURLESTONE HOTEL NOVICE HURDLE (CLASS E) \$2,925 3YO 2m 1f

| Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Section | Sect

INTERNET ON WWW.ECLIPSE. CO.UK.NARACECOURSE/NOVICE CHASE (CLASS E) £4.075 2m 5f 110vds

PP-P30 KONGIES MELODY (30) C Poptiam 6 to 7 ... _ G Tormey B 342-32 PEARL'S CHOICE (11) J McCornocine 9 to 7 . J R Kevanagh

- 9 declared -BETTING: 8-11 Sparkling Cone, 5-1 Pearl's Choice, 7-1 Holdinsclose, Pennymoor Prince, 6-1 Gigi Beach, 10-1 Luv-U-Frank, 33-1 others

2.30 EBF 'NH' NOVICE HURDLE (QUALIFI-ER) (CLASS D) £3.650 added 2m 1f

SO-IP IRANOS (FR) (21) (b) (8F) M Poe 5 n 5.... G Supple (5)
2 37M WELSH SILK (15) D Gandolo 5 n 5 G Supple (5)
500 BOLD ROMEO (21) N Handerson 5 n 0 ... T C Murphy (7)
00-P6 CHARLLE BANKER (21) K Burle 5 n 0 ... Mr J Tizzard (5)
P4 OSRBY GILCHRESST (11) R Frost 5 n 0 ... J Frost
008P DUKE OF FAIRFIELD (48) A Newcombe 4 n 0 D Fuhrmann

HYPERION 12.50 Just Jasmine 1.20 Storm Run 1.55 GLITTER ISLE (nap) 2.30 None Stirred 3.00 Danger Baby 3.30 Negative Equity

GOING: Good (Good to Soft in places)

GOING: Good (Good to Soft in places)

GOING: Good (Good to Soft in places)

GOING: British of Even on B3081 ADMISSION: Members £14:
Tattersals £9, Course £4 (Under-16s tree) CAR PARIK: Free

LEADING TRAINERS: K Bailey 23-89 (333%) J Gifford 15-72
(22.2%) G Hutband 13-61 (213%) In Henderson 11-38 (28.9%)

LEADING JOCKEYS: N Williamson 15-70 (214%) M Brennan

FSI (137%) J A McCarthy 6-38 (15.8%) R Thornton 5-5 (33.3%)

FAVOURITES: 211-488 (43.1%)

12.50 FATHER XMAS MARES NOVICE HURDLE (CLASS E) £3,000 added 2m 1 2P-P0 DOLCE NOTTE (4) M Pipe 7 11 3 C Mar 2 43-501 LIST LASMINE (28) (7) N 88-90 5 11 3 C Mar 2 43-501 LIST LASMINE (28) (7) N 88-90 5 11 3 R Gre 3 O ARDENT BRIDE (28) J (7) N 88-90 5 11 3 R Gre 4 C AVONCLUFF (288) J (7) N 9 10 T Descor 5 20 DAISY (27) (88) Mar Person 4 10 C R Rat 6 0 PRINGE BENEFIT (20) J (2) Lotter 6 10 10 S Lair 7 30(1-0 KENTFORD TWA (37) J Mains 6 0 10 A Bate 8 421-44 KOMAHALLA (11) G Batering 5 10 TO Benefit (13) P Jones 5 10 TO Sophie Matches 10 24-14 POTTER AGAIN (37) (8F) D Natiotism 5 10 TO R John 13 44-08 SALLY SCALLY (15) A Hotota 5 10 TO P H J Little SALLY SCALLY (15) A Hotota 5 10 TO Little 13 TREMEJOCH Mass N. George 8 10 TO D Sinter 13 DECEMBER (13) P Jones 6 TO TO DOCK 8 Komathalla, 8-1 Ardent Bride, Kentford Tina, 10-1 others . P Hicks

1.20 HARRY DUFOSEE HANDICAP CHASE (CLASS D) £5,000 added 2m

1 636-22 MORSTOCK (62) (CD) R Hodges 7 n to 1 Descensible 2 33-95 CLIFTON (64ME (37) BR Milman 7 n to 5 Saler (5) 3 15-1F1 STORBI RUN (34) (D) P Nachols 7 n to 5 Saler (5) 4 30-25 THE CARROT MAN (34) (D) P Wirelworth 9 n 3 5 22524 WHO'S TO SAN (30) (D Br) Dr P Rechard in 0 n Dr P Prichard 5 22524 WHO'S TO SAN (30) (D Br) Dr P Prichard in 0 n Dr P Prichard 6 232-5 MORDIC VALLEY (195) (D) M Pape 6 10 to 7 65-62 TROUMALE (49) (D) A Timel 6 10 3 Learney 1 Morstock (195) (D) A region of the control of

1.55 MID SEASON CHASE (INTERMEDI-ATE) (CLASS B) £10.000 added 2m 5f 1-1030 STATELY HOME (34) (D) P Bowen 6 Tt 2: H Johnson 20121 MORTHERN STARLIGHT (13) (C) (D) M Ppe 6 Tt 6 C Maude 2020 AROUND THE GALE (34) (D) D Gardot 6 Tt 4 Harvey 2016 GLTTER ISLE (269) (D) J Gristor 7 Tt 4 P Hide 26-213 KOO'S PROMISE (10) (CD) C Pocham 6 TC 12 R Greene

2.30 GOLD CARD HANDICAP HURDLE (QUALIFIER) (CLASS B) £7,000 2m 6f

3.00 LORD STALBRIDGE HANDICAP CHASE (CLASS B) £10,000 added 3m 1f 110yds

- 7 declared -SETTING: 11-4 Limon Rocks, 3-1 Statey Bay, 7-2 Jultiera, 4-1 Danger Baby, 8-1 Resurepaire, 19-1 Foots Errand, Brave Highlander

9	3.30 PARKERS CATERERS NOVICE HAN ICAP HURDLE (CLASS E) £3,000 27
7	ICAP HURDLE (CLASS E) £3,000 2t
	1 234F6- MR DARCY (270) (BF) M Poe 5 11 TI C Max
ă	2 4334 MILFORD SOUND (20) P Hobbs 4 11 7 L Hen
	3 D54 CABALLUS (USA) (22) Mrs J Priman 4 Ti 4
,	4 2P6/3- FABULDUS NTOTO (F147) M Saunders 7 ti 3
ï	
•	
	6 35-085 RUM FOR COVER (ST) Mrs P Dudled 5 TI 0 P Hol
	7 06330 LOTSCHEERO EXPRESS (15) D Cardalo 5 to 13 Sophie Milatel
١,	8 006 NEGATIVE EQUITY (22) A Turnel 5 to 13
	9 4853 GALACIA (25) R Airer 5 10 12 N Willinsington
	10 /40P0- DORMY THREE (P221) R Hodges 7 10 3 T Descond
	1) /555-4 EANDRA (F31) C Popham 5 103
	12 FOO-4P CATEMPO (18) (BF) G McCourt 7 10 0 A Bales
f	13 063-6 SONG OF KENDA (52) B R Milman 5 10 0 D Salter
	14 FPS253 BET WILTSHIRE (18) ? Chemings 5 10 0
	- 14 declared -
3	- 14 décente -

Minimum: 10st. Catempo 9s: 10to, Song Ol Kende & Bet Wilsdare 9st 6tb. BETTING: 3-1 Milliard Sound, 9-2 Mr Darcy, 13-2 Welton Arsonel, 8-1 Ca-ballus, Gelacia, Ilandra, 10-1 Lotschberg Express, 12-1 others

DOUBLE ENGAGEMENTS

engaged on Boxing Day. Each horse will run at their second preference meeting only if their first preference is abandoned.

	First preference
	Second
Ambleside	3.30 Newton Abb
	2.55 Kempton
Cottage Craft	12.45 Wetherby
	2.05 Market Rase
Don't Tell Tom	1_30 Huntingden
•	3.35 Hereford

Bam N'Eggs

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With the League campaign having reached the half-way point, Independent writers assess the performances of the 20 teams so far, while Football Correspondent Glenn Moore offers a finishing order come May

1st MAN UNITED

Teddy Sheringham's penalties are dreadful and Ryan Giggs' crosses can suggest he has donned the wrong / highly sponsored boots. but we are talking degrees of perfection here. Not since Liverpool in the Sev-

enties and Eighties has a team looked so comfortable with their ability.

Nine points better off than they were this time last season, Alex Ferguson's assertion that the Premiership does not start until January 1 is ringing a little hollow as everyone else thinks the race is all but over by Christmas. To paraphrase the United manager, it will take a collapse of Devon Loch proportions to stop them now.

The key to the team is not so much their attacking threat, although heaven knows they have enough, but their solidity. When do Denis Irwin, Henning Berg, the Nevilles and Nicky Butt have bad matches? Hardly ever and they hold things together when the party pieces up front do not come off. Titles are won with 1-0 wins against Southampton.

Star pupil: Peter Schmeichel. Must do better: How?

2ND CHELSEA

In another year the ground will be finished, the team are even closer. Both already tantalise with potential Ken Bates deserves credit for the ground - though he could not resist his unnecessary attack on Matthew Harding and Ruud Gullit for the team, notably how he has



nstilled the squad system in a club of stars. They may have lost too many games to win

the league, usually with flat away days, but they are a cup threat in Europe and at home. The side are attractive to watch but have displayed the necessary edge when ruffled. Among the highly priced imports some young

alent has been given its chance with Nick Crittenden the sixth English teenager to play under Gullit. The FA Cup meeting with Manchester United is a titanic game. Cheisea are well capable

of beating United over one match, had Gustavo Poyet not been injured they would push them close over the long haul too. Star pupil: Dan Petrescu.

Must do better: Until November Zola, De Goey and Le Saux under par, but all now in form.

3RD BLACKBURN

Not many managers could sell £13m worth of defenders and end up with a better team, but Roy Hodgson has managed it and Blackburn have every reason for optimism in 1998. "We feel we are going to win



every time we go the pitch," Stuart Ripley says. They usually do, too, thanks to solidity rather than extravagant flair and it will take a talented side to finish above them this season. Unfortunately for Hodgson a very good team hold a fourpoint advantage that is unlikely to be eroded.

The only criticism you can level at Hodgson is that he might have bought too hastily because he has brought seven players to Ewood and only Stephane Henchoz turns out regularly for the first team. It takes a strong personality to realise your errors, however, and the new manager is certainly that

Second place in the Premiership is within their capabilities and, who knows, the FA Cup. Just the former would make it a splendid return for a manager in his first season. Star pupil: Stuart Ripley.

Must do better: Garry Flitcroft.

4TH LIVERPOOL

Most teams, with the arguable exception of Manchester United, are invariably two players short of where they want to be. By signing Paul Ince and Karlheinz Riedle, Liverpool must have thought they had

found the missing links. It has proved an exercise in self-delusion, for it left the weaknesses in goal and in central defence unaddressed. Ince has failed, in any case, to have quite the anticipated impact; the Kop awaits more

meaningful signs of his commitment than theatrically kissing the badge. With his suspension, running parallel to a ban on Robbie Fowler and home humiliations by Barnsley and United, it was not surprising that Roy Evans' job was again the subject of dark speculation. Consistency remains elusive; one cannot

help but wonder what Steve McManaman might be achieving under Messrs Ferguson and Kidd. Still, Evans' move for Brad Friedel shows an awareness of the problems, and Michael Owen's impact, at barely 18, has been a real bonus. Star pupils: Michael Owen, Jamie Redknapp. Must do better: David James, Paul Ince.

5TH ARSENAL

When they took up temporary tenure of the Premiership's top flat in early autumn it was fashionable to see Arsenal as Manchester United's most serious challengers. Ian Wright was setting records, Dennis Bergkamp setting new standards and Arsene Wenger's remodelled side setting the division aligh-

As the nights grew longer, however, so did Ar-As the rights grew longer, however, so the rights grew longer, however, senal's sick list and the disciplinary points take and in November les poulets came hometo rook. A seriously under-strength first-team sollieur videly exposed by the absences of Bergkarry. Vieira and Petit – while the ever-perverse take. Wright managed to go missing despite, and ing in the side. Now, even with the significant and sentees back, the north Londoners have failed to re-establish their early momentum.

For all his summer activity Wenger has not replaced ageing full-backs, and few recent pur-chases appear ready to push for first team places, which only makes the sale of Paul-Merson all the more questionable. Star pupil: Bergkamp.

Must do better: Wright and Overmars...

6TH NEWCASTLE UTD

Just like last season, when they thrashed Manchester United 5-0 in October, Newcastle look to have peaked prematurely once again. The September beating of Barcelona already seems a distant memory. The con-



querors of the Catalans have been playing true to their present station: a middle order Premiership team.

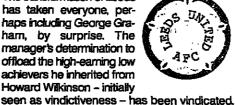
The absence of Alan Shearer has had much to do with the middling state of affairs at St James' Park. Since Faustino Asprilla's stomach injury, and subsequent struggle to regain match fitness. Newcastle have played like a team without a focal point. Their defence has looked less suspect when the inspirational Stuart Pearce and the assured Alessandro Pistone have been fit to play; Newcastle's form dipped markedly when both were out

A fit Shearer and a late charge like last season's will be required to put the Magpies in the frame for a Uefa Cup place.

upil: Alessandro Pistone. Must do better: Jon Dahl Tomasson.

7TH LEEDS UNITED

The transformation of Leeds has taken everyone, perhaps including George Graham, by surprise. The manager's determination to offload the high-earning low achievers he inherited from



Suddenly it was Graham's team and one which, despite the evidence of Stamford Bridge, actually tries to win games rather than making 0-0 their sole aim. While Nigel Martyn has been patchy in goal by last season's standards, the rejeuvenation of Rod Wallace and a midfield no longer staffed by defenders have more than compensated. The Australian teenager Harry Kewell has been a real find, too, his mobility helping dangerous counter-attacking options.

Graham knows, however, that spirit and organisation can take them only so far. To become genuine contenders, they still need two or three "special players", as he puts it. But the arrival of highly paid stars could jeopardise present

udiis: Lucas Hadede. Harry Kewell

Must do better: David Robertson.

8TH DERBY COUNTY

Generally formidable at their new home. often feeble away, Derby's overall performance to date must nevertheless have exceeded expectations.

For such a polyglot team, brimming with Estonians and Scots, Costa Ricans and Croats, Danes and Jamaicans, they have gelled surprisingly quickly.

Moreover, they have maintained upward mobility (it is only 18 months since a surprising promotion) despite being without defensive linchpin Igor Stimac for long periods. Although the strikers, Paolo Wanchope and Dean Sturridge, have done well, one wickedly unpredictable and the other with pace to burn, the pivotal figure has been Francesco Baiano.

Many clubs use a clever, mobile forward in "the hole". Few perform there as well as Baiano, Jim Smith's recruit from Fiorentina. With Leicester's resilience, especially when defending a lead away, they would be a fair bet for Europe, but then their East Midlands rivals do not have their panache. JIDIIS: Paolo Wanchooe, Hancesco Balano Must do better: Darryl Powell, Jonathan Hunt.

9TH WEST HAM UTD

Happy at home, hopeless away. West Ham's wildly erratic form mirrors that of Leeds' last season. It is a dilemma Harry Redknapp must resolve if the Hammers are to achieve a finish in the top half of the

Premiership, which has become a realistic goal

Fortress Upton Park certainly possesses in John Hartson and Paul Kitson - shrewd purchases both - fearsome forward power while the club's back line of the precocious Rio Ferdinand, Ian Pearce and David Unsworth - the youngest in the élite - is steadily growing in

Eyal Berkovitch is the player who makes the Hammers tick, however, and the little Israeli's purchase from Southampton in the close season shows that Redknapp now has a shrewd eye for a bargain. Yet the nagging doubt remains that West Ham need another couple of additions to the squad before they can travel in style.

Must do better: Steve Lomas.

10TH ASTON VILLA

Puzzlingly, there have been two Villas so far: the team who have turned on the passion and the patience as required en route to the last eight of the Uefa Cup; and the palfid bunch who eftectively blew their championship chances by losing the first four matches



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Europe, and perhaps the FA Cup, will keep interest alive, but after successive top-five finishes, Doug Ellis, Brian Little and a record number of season-ticket holders expected more. For all the manager's loyalty towards his £10.5m front players, the problem lies with Stan Collymore and Savo Milosevic. A single loose cannon would. be one too many at Old Trafford, yet Villa have two and have had to deploy Dwight Yorke out of position to accommodate them,

One fears it will all end in tears (or at Molineux) for the strangely lethargic Collymore, but a backbone of players like Mark Bosnich, Gareth Southgate, Steve Staunton, Mark Draper and the underrated lan Taylor should ensure they finish nearer the top than the bottom.

Must do better: Stan Collymore.

11TH WIMBLEDON

This time last year they were 20-odd games unbeaten and dreaming of Wembley and Europe. They are still performing creditably, especially in comparison to such alleged giants as Everton



and Spurs, but there is now a shadow over the club. The Norwegian investment, and further ru-

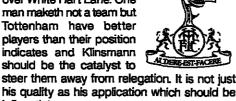
mours of a move to Dublin, have left manager Joe Kinnear uncertain of his position and the fans fearful of the future. At least there now appears a dialogue with Merton Council but much is shrouded in doubt. One wonders if Kinnear is keeping an eye on events at White Hart On the pitch injuries, and the loss of Oyvind

Leonhardsen, have weakened the side but the emergence of Carl Cort has provided a counterbalance. Robbie Earle has been pre-occupied with Jamaica but, with a World Cup in his sights. may recover his best form to give the club a timely lift. Star pupil: Carl Cort.

Must do better: Robbie Earle.

12TH TOTTENHAM

Jürgen is back and, sud-



in 1977 Tottenham's team included Glenn unless they are prepared to marry perspiration

with inspiration, are the present side. Darren Anderton's return from injury is also mportant as Christian Gross attempts to reverse the tendency to fall away in the second half through intensive training. Klinsmann's preparedness to work on his game should set the right example. If David Ginola is prepared to follow suit the early belief that he may be part of the solution, not the problem, should be

Star pupils: Sol Campbell, David Ginola. Must do better: Everyone else.

17TH SHEFFIELD WED

Trying to assess Wednesday is like trying to

work out whether Pleat was a victim of his own

decisions or bad timing. Good or bad, they can

move seamlessly between extremes and it is

entirely in keeping with their character that they

should follow four wins with successive defeats.

predictability. A lethal goalscorer one moment,

an over-elaborate squanderer of possession the

next, he both inspires and infuriates. Whether

he and Benito Carbone can thrive in the same

team is a problem Atkinson has to deal with,

relegated but you can hardly accuse Wednes-

day of being boring. No club is when Big Ron

is around.

Star pupil: Paolo Di Canio.

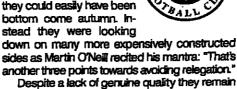
Must do better: Paolo Di Canio.

They might win the FA Cup, they could get

Paolo Di Canio is the embodiment of their un-

13TH LEICESTER CITY

The fixture computer dealt Leicester such an arduous start (their first four games were against members of last season's top five) that they could easily have been bottom come autumn. Instead they were looking



the division's hardest-working team. Few others would have equalised in stoppage time as they did against Crystal Palace this month. Of course it is not all graft: Matt Elliott, barely a year after graduating from Oxford, is the most rugged and refined of centre-backs, while Muzzy izzet is blossoming into a midfielder with quick feet and a sharp brain.

But there have been signs of late that a rather one-dimensional style has been rumbled. And how long before O'Neil, the brightest manager of his generation, tires of the bargain basement and takes on a Tottenham or an Everton? Star pupils: Matt Elliott, Muzzy Izzet.

Must do better: Steve Claridge, Rob Savage.

14TH SOUTHAMPTON

While a good season for Southampton is one in which they avoid relegation, their manager Dave Jones arrived in the summer with higher expectations. The half-term situation sees both Saints and Jones

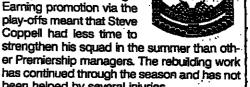
making slow progress. An injury crisis, combined with some typically abysmal defending, saw Saints at the bottom after two months, but some inspired, even brave, purchases by the budget-restrained Jones (of Carlton Palmer and David Hirst) paid off and a late autumn rally appeared to signal a renaissance at The Deli.

But while Palmer and Hirst added experience to a side with powerful attacking potential (Kevin Davies and Egil Ostenstad), too often the distracted natures of some (Matt Le Tissier) and incompetence of several others (most of the defenders) have cost the Saints dear. If signs of a tighter back four turn into a more tangible impenetrability, the annual spring struggle may yet Star pupils: Kevin Davies, Paul Jones .

Must do better: Matt Le Tissier.

15TH CRYSTAL PALACE

Considering they were everyone's favourites for relegation, Palace will be more than satisfied with 13th place at this stage. Earning promotion via the play-offs meant that Steve Coppell had less time to strengthen his squad in the summer than oth-

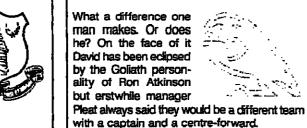


been helped by several injuries. Neil Shipperley, who initially lost his place, has surprised many with his good form of late, but Palace have lacked penetration in attack when Bruce Dyer has been injured. Coppell will also be hoping that his Italians, Attilio Lombardo and

Michele Padovano, recover fitness quickly. Well organised at the back, Palace have defended well as a team and have been at their best when counter-attacking. Eighteen of their 21 points have been won in away matches - only Chelsea have earned more from their travels but with 11 of their last 19 matches at Selfiurst Park the key to survival will be their home form. Star pupil: Andy Roberts. Must do better: Yitzak Zohar.

16TH EVERTON

Where do you begin to put things right? Howard Kendall is one of the great Everton managers and he does not seem to know and, short of a vast amount of money that does not seem to be forthcoming,



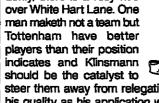
the prospects are bleak. So-so players have been bought instead of true quality, partly because the Les Ferdinands of this world would not touch the perpetually troubled club.

The end product is a midfield which cannot create and a strike-force that cannot score and the team's only redeeming quality is their ability to fight which is admirable in Barnsley, but

lamentable for a club of Everton's prestige. Kendali says there are some good youngsters within Goodison, the most forward of which is Danny Cadamarteri, and the future is bright. But that does not help the present. Alan Hansen famously said you do not win titles with kids; with luck Everton will not get the chance to prove him wrong in the First Division next season.

Star pupil: Gary Speed. Must do better: Duncan Ferguson.

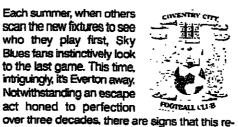
denly, there is a rosy hue



his quality as his application which should be influential Hoddle, Steve Perryman and Pat Jennings but they were not too good to go down. Neither,

18TH COVENTRY CITY

Each summer, when others scan the new fixtures to see who they play first, \$ky Blues fans instinctively look to the last game. This time, intriguingly, its Everton away. Notwithstanding an escape act honed to perfection



ally could be the year Coventry take the drop. Cruelly for Gordon Strachan, injury has robbed him of Gary McAllister's class and leadership just as games with Manchester United. Chelsea, Arsenal et al are looming. The signing of George Boateng, from Feyenoord, and the return of Noel Whelan should help tide them over until the captain's return, but by February the damage could be done.

Despite having the beleaguered Geoffrey Robinson as a benefactor, a succession of managers at Highfield Road have recruited on the cheap. The acquisition of McAllister, Whelan and Dion Dublin bucked the trend, but they still havetoo many journeymen. Giving Strachan a contract until 2002 was also tempting fate. Star pupil: Gary McAllister. Must do better: John Salako.

19TH BOLTON W'ERS

Nothing illustrates the gap between the First Division and the Premiership better than Bolton. Cavaliers last year with 100 League goals, they have become skinflints, scoring and conceding 14 goals, by far the



Getting walloped week after week two years ago has not allowed players to shed inhibitions, the experience still looms large in their psyche. Safety-first is both their objective and their attitude.

Nevertheless this team of roundheads has its merits, not least Scott Sellars, who recalls the age of the inside-forward. Now approaching the speed of Pat Crerand, he provides an endless supply of imagination from the left flank which, when you watch Newcastle these days. makes it all the more puzzling why Kevin Keegan let him go.

Only if the relegation battle has been won. are we likely to see Bolton fully off the leash. Unfortunately, that is unlikely to happen. Star pupil: Scott Sellars. Must do better: Dean Holdsworth.

20TH BARNSLEY

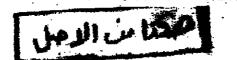
Be careful with your dreams, tury of craving to be in the top division was series. top division was satisfied last May and reality has trampled the idytl ever since.

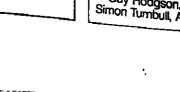
Their tans say they resemble Brazil but a better comparison is view bledon Like Joe Kinnear's team they run unit drop, but unlike the masters they have not the the years of practice or the youth production ins.

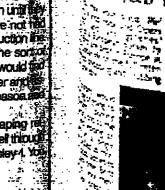
Even so Neil Redfearn has had the sort of 1997 that more renowned midfielders would impossible to emulate. A strong tackler and strute passer, he scored 19 times last season and

eight this time in a struggling team. You cannot imagine Barnsley escaping res egation but one result will sustain Oakwell thiough its disappointment: Liverpool 0, Barnsley I. You can endure a lot after that. Star pupil: Neil Redfeam. Must do better: Gorgi Hristov.

Reports written by Glenn Moore, Phil Shaw. Guy Hodgson, Paul Newman, Matt Territh, Simon Tumbull, Andrew Martin and Nick Harts







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My father's exclamation on a holy day justified booking for blasphemy no cause to complain about the the holiday period." restrictions imposed on them at

They remember 11am kick-offs iourneys on steam trains to fulfil Box- haven't forgotten the journey," Coing rooms of deserted stations, said. We were stuck at Bridgend for nursing injuries in heatless carriages; six hours with nothing to eat or drink,

for England in the 1966 World Cup who was then captain of England. final, recalls travelling back from and thought the whole thing was Swansea on Christmas Day with Ful- bloody ridiculous." ham. "You can fly as far as Los

British footballers are in agree- travelled by rail in those days and meant that teams covered hundreds ment is that today's heroes have got there was only a skeleton service over

Finally getting to bed in the early hours, the team had to play again that afternoon. "I don't remember on Christmas morning; long, jolting how things went at Swansea but I ing Day fixtures; the draughty wait- hen, now a property dealer in Kent, dry, curied up sandwiches. Happy trying to fan some warmth from a Christmas - they had to be kidding. miserable coal fire in the waiting George Cohen, who turned out room. I looked at Johnny Haynes,

Witless administration that had Angeles in the time it took us to get yet to see the sense of arranging

One of the things on which old home from Wales," he said. "Teams derby matches over Christmas of miles to play each other twice in 24 hours. Some of the results seemed ridiculous, too. Walloped at

home: victors away. On Boxing Day 1963, less than six months before defeating Preston North End in the FA Cup final, West Ham lost 8-2 at home to Blackburn Rovers. Two days later, showing one change, Eddie Bovington for Martin Peters, they won 3-1 at Blackburn. Peters would play a significant role cost him an FA Cup-winner's medal, through being unable to regain his

place until the following season.



KEN JONES

in England's World Cup victory but West Ham on Boxing Day 1958, their the turnaround against Blackburn second over a congested Christmas programme, made relegation a Tottenham's 4-1 home loss to ern Double winners. Sitting at the with hangovers. A personal favourite match controlled by Stanley Rous, draw: the rent money.

heard a reporter declare that a club with such poor parking facilities deserved to be in the Second Division.

many years later. "I was angry because it was such a stupid remark," he said, "but those Christmas results proved that we were in real trouble. Something had to be done."

Relegation was avoided but not before Nicholson took the sensational step of leaving out Danny Blanchflower, who spent a month in

serious possibility just two seasons chaotic Christmas arrangements erees on Christmas Day was not ad- years ago, when the bonus was two before they became the first mod- but some lively souls who turned out visable, as my father learned in a pounds for a win and a pound for a

ham's manager, Bill Nicholson, mally absternious winger whose equilibrium was greatly affected by Football Association and president the drinks he was persuaded to take of Fifa, the game's ruling body. In on Christmas Eve. On the field next Rous's view my father's exclamation I reminded Nicholson of this morning, fearful of being found out, he begged not to be given the tified booking for blasphemy. ball. When his centre in the final minute led to an own goal that won ing to matches on Christmas Day the match, still unable to distinguish

tened in the back of the net.

unseen by the referee, left him flat-

back of the directors' box. Totten- among anecdotes concerns a nor- later Sir Stanley, who went on to become an autocratic secretary of the of "Jesus Christ" on a holy day jus-

The sound of supporters trampmorning has long gone from English clearly between his own team and football. The majority today are asthe opposition, he trotted over and tonished to hear of it happening. As congratulated the culprit. A punch, for the players, the worst they can expect is a training session and travel in luxury buses. Pressure, strain, ab-Cautions were rare in those days sence from their families? Forget it. Old players speak not only of but swearing in the earshot of ref- They should have been around 30

Conference remains to confound Sir John

Sir John Hall may not be bowled over by the format governing Continental club rugby, but the Newcastle tycoon's opinions clearly carry little weight where it matters most - in the boardroom of European

Rugby Cup Ltd. As Chris Hewett reports, the decision to run both European competitions again next season means Sir John will have to put up or shut up.

European rugby is either manna from heaven or a sharp toepoke in the bank account, - Table 1 depending on the tournament in which a club finds itself competing. Qualify for the Heineken Cup and you guarantee yourself at least six weeks of glitzy, glamorous and generally lucrative exposure. Slum it in the European Conference at all to play against, not even and you can kiss a fond farewell to a month and a half of Premiership or top league action have been made to the compeos like Padova, Famil Constanta and the Dutch

national team instead. Club rugby in the northern hemisphere so favours the baves over the have-nots that it is something of a shock to discover that the directors of ERC Ltd. the organising body of the two existing cross-border tournaments, do not include Baroness Thatcher among their number. There have been moans and whinges about the unfairness of it all, but, as a result of last Friday's get-together in Dublin, the competitions will proceed next among the possible starters. year along broadly the same lines as this season.

been bellyaching about their terday. The West Countrymen

lack of meaningful rugby dur- were expected to complete the ing the recent domestic hiatus, although they will presumably be more than happy to hitch a ride on the Heineken gravy train should they happen to be in the top four of the Allied Dunbar Premiership come the middle of May. A number of big-spending sides - Newcastle, Saracens, Richmond - declared themselves thoroughly cheesed off with backwater life in the unsponsored second-string Conference competition, to the extent that Sir John Hall, selfstyled king of the Geordies, called for its abolition even as his side were battling away in last Saturday's semi-final against Agen. No chance of that, it seems. The 12-strong ERC

board have given the green light to another 32-team Conference next season and if Newcastle fail to make the Heineken cut, they will be involved. Unless, of course, Sir John takes his ball home and scratches from the tournament, a move that would leave his side with no one the Dutch.

Only two significant changes in which home and away pool blocks to allow for a fortnight of World Cup qualifying activfinal play-off phase; the last eight will feature the five winplus the three best runners-up. The Conference, meanwhile, will contain only a dozen French teams - there were 16 this season - and that creates space for four fledgling national sides.

Meanwhile Gloucester, one The news will not please Conference competitors, were Rowlands, has been appointed Mycoe and Alex Thompson those English clubs who have busy on the transfer front yes chief executive for the 1999

signing of Brian Johnson, the England A wing who captains the Army and scored 27 league and cup tries for Newbury last season, and were simultaneously pushing hard for the services of Steve Ojomoh, the former England loose forward transferlisted by Bath earlier this month.

Johnson, whose pace made him a target for a number of Premiership clubs, was thought to have agreed a professional deal under which his military career could be kept on hold. Ojomoh, meanwhile, was being pursped as a natural back-row replacement for Ed Pearce, who undergoes groin surgery next month and will not return until mid-April.

Saracens, the Premiership leaders, go into their important Boxing Day match with Leices-Richard Hill, their versatile suffering from a hamstring infrom Orrell, completes the Saint Helens yesterday. breakaway trio alongside François Pienaar and Tony Diprose.

Simon Shaw, back in their tight the transfer. games will be played in two five for Saturday's visit to ners of the four-team groups end's Heineken Cup semi-final. gives way to Matt Perry at full- | Sculthorpe. back while Mike Catt moves to centre to allow the transfer-listed Richard Butland a run at stand-off. Up front, John Mallett replaces Victor Ubogu on the world." Germany, the Netherlands, Ro-the tight head and Brian Cusack second row.

 The former International of England's more enthusiastic Rugby Board secretary, Keith World Cup.



Jimmy Johnson, the Miami Dolphins coach, reacts to a controversial call that went against his team on a two-point conversion late in Monday night's game against the New England Patriots. Miami lost the match 14-12, a result that gave the Patriots the AFC East title. They now play host to the Dolphins in next week's wild card game Photograph: AP

RUGBY LEAGUE

Sculthorpe joins Saints for record fee

ter at Vicarage Road without Paul Sculthorpe, the 20-yearold Great Britain loose forward, England back-rower. Hill is became the most expensive made a mess of Irish hopes of forward in the game when he, a place in the last four. The New jury so Alex Bennett, a signing sealed his £370,000 move to

Saints agreed to pay £300,000 in cash and part with the £70,000-rated Welsh in- en a solid start by their open-Wasps have two England ternational forward Chris Mor- ers, Debbie Hockley, who and take on humangous tition formats. The Heineken, internationals, Will Green and ley to Warrington to complete scored 70, and Emily Drumm,

St Helens already possess the Northampton while Bath also costliest back in Paul Newlove make changes for their awkward - he joined them in a £500,000 ity, will not feature a quarter- trip to Sale. Jon Callard, whose : cash-plus-players deal two years five penalties guided the club to ago - and exceeded the victory over Pau in last week- £250,000 Leeds paid Wigan for to 105 for 9 off theirs. Ellery Hanley in 1991 to land

The Saints coach, Shaun McRae, said: "At the moment, for his age, you have got to say . an extras tally of 35, but the New he is one of the best players in Oldham have paid an undis-

mania, Spain and Portugal are replaces German Llanes in the closed fee to Rochdale to sign their former captain Neil Flanagan, 27, a scrum-half who also played for Huddersfield. David have left Sheffield after failing to agree terms with the club.

New Zealand power through to semi-final against England

The England women's team will face New Zealand in their World Cup semi-final in Madras on Boxing Day after the Kiwis Zealanders overran Ireland by 139 runs in Bombay yesterday.

New Zealand, who won the toss and elected to bat, were givwho made 60.

They put on 121 and, in the event, the Kiwis could have stopped there. They went on to make 244 for 3 from their 50 overs and then restricted Ireland

The difference between the sides was as clear in the field as it was at the crease. The Irish bowlers contributed 21 wides to Zealanders fielded brilliantly, throwing themselves around in their determination to put pressure on the Irish batting. Only three of the Irish made double figures, Adele Spence top-scor-

ing with 18 runs off 35 balls. tournament, play India in the

other semi-final in Gauhati today. New Zealand won loss NEW ZEALAND

D Hockley c McDonald b Shillington E Drumm low Beggs... S Fruin low McDonald. *M. Lewis not out. Extres 50 86 21w Inb). Total (for 3, 50 overs). Fall: 1-121, 2-175, 3-218 Did not bat: K Brown, K Remet, †R Rolls, S MacLauchan, C Nicholson, C Campbell Bowling: McDonald 10-0-51-1; O'Nell 10-2-

"M Greatey c Drumm b Brown ... N Squire c Hockey b Ramel ... C O'Not low Brown C O'Leary c Lewis b Ramel 19 Dawson b Withers G Leehy st Rolls b McLeuchlan Shittington run out Skoyles not out Spence not out

Total (for 9, 50 overs). Fell: 1-1, 2-25, 3-25, 4-35, 5-57, 6-59, 7-87, 8-70, 9-71 New Zealand best Ireland by 139 runs.

Graham Napier, the Essex allrounder, produced a fine spell of in-swing bowling in Port Elizabeth to take four wickets in 15 balls and lead England Under-19 Australia, the only team to to victory by 47 runs over South beat England so far in the African Schools, who collapsed from 190 for 4 to 221 all out.

in Australia. The Shaffleid coach John Kear, said: "We offered them both the same contract as last year

and with the new salary cap we cannot extend it. They felt they could not accept our offer and have left the Eagles."

The American Mary Joe Fernandez

has dropped out of the Australian Open because of a wrist injury, ac-

cording to the tournament organisers. Fernandez, who is ranked No 11 in

the world, has twice been runner-up in the women's singles at the Aus-tralian Open, losing to Steffi Graf in 1990 and Monica Seles in 1992. Graf

1990 and Monaca Seese 11 1992. Citat and Seles, who have won eight Aus-tralian titles between them, are both expected to appear in the Open. It will be Graffs first Grand Stam since last year's French Open.

The Russian Speed Skating Federa-tion said yesterday that it had appealed against a possible life ban on the skater Svettana Fedotidina, who had refused an out-of-competition dope test in

Speed skating

TODAY'S

NUMBER

Tennis

BOXING DAY FIXTURE GUIDE

Football 3.0 unless stated FA CARLING PRE Arsenal y Leicester (12.0) Raton Villa y Tottenham (5.0).

NATIONWIDE FOOTBALL LEAGUE FIRST DIVISION Charlton v Norwich (12.0) Crews v Manchester City Jedowi.
BINTERLINK EXPRESS MEDIAND ALLIANCE
(YIG): Bridgnorth v Shifmst; Chasetown v Pelself, Felesowen Harrison v Chaury, Kingle Norhv Beldemen St. Michaels: Knyperaley v
Plopaster, Pershore v Stratfort; Pushali v
Borweit; Sendwei v West Midlende Police:
Stepenhill v Berweit; Wednesfeld v Willenhall. stnouth v Queen's Perk Ra ding v West Bromwich (12.)

WOIVES Y CARDY CAU
SECOND CIVISION
Bournemouth Y Gillingham (12.0)
Brentford Y Southend (12.0)
Bristol City Y Millhad (12.0)

Luton v Northa

Wrexham v Wigen (12.0) ... Wycorabe v Watford (7.30) York v Grimeby ... THIRD DIVISION THIRD DIVISION
Barnet v Peterborough (12.0)
Barnet v Peterborough (12.0)
Brighton v Colcivester (1.0)
Cambridge Utd v Leyton Orient (12.0)
Cardill v Exeter
Darlington v Macciesfield
Doncaster v Manafield
Hartlepool v Scarborough
Hull v Chester
Lincoln v Rotherham
Rochdale v Shrevsbury
Scanthorpe v Notta County

i puwe v riessanc. SaurnOoff (RSH LEAGUE Prender Division: Bellymens v Colerains; Clifornille v Cru-sades; Glentoran v Linfeld; Portadown v Gle-nevon. First Division; Carrick Rangers v Bancax. Revolt. Fest bivelook; Carnox Françeis Valegeis Abergox.

LEAGUE OF WALES: Abergetwith in thisystem of 230; Caerness Valendook; Caerness Caerness Valendook; Caerness

ALLIED DUNBAR PREMERSHIP One: Serecens v Leicester (3.0). CLUS MATCH: West Hartlepool v Hartle-bed Space CM

UHLSPORT UNITED COUNTIES LEAGUE Prepier Division: Eynesbury v St Neob (YLD); Stanford v Mintees Blackstone.

UNILET SUSSEX COUNTY LEAGUE First Di-vision: Arundal v Littlehempton (110); Burgess Hij v Hassocks (110); Pagham v Salsey (120).

WINSTONLEAD KENT LEAGUE First Divi plon: Hythe v Follostone Inviola (115)

SCREWITX DIRECT LEAGUE Premier Divi

JEWSON EASTERN LEAGUE Premier Divi sion (110): Clecton v Herwich & Perfeston; Fel-enham v Welton; Greet Yermouth v Gorieston

Rugby League PRIENCLY MATCHES: Featherstone Rovers v Watefield Trinity (1130); Leeds v Halifax (1130); Wigan v Si Helens (30).

Ice hockey EXPRESS CUP: Sheffield ham Panthers (730).

Basketball BUDWEISER LEAGUE: Leicester v London Leopards (30)

HOLIDAY FIXTURES AND POOLS GUIDE

Boxing Day FA Carling Premiership

3 Cheisea v Wimbledon... Crystal Palace v Southampton Derby v Newcastle . Liverpool v Leeds Manchester Utd v Everton .

OR MARTENS LEAGUE Premier i Athestone v Nuneston (TID); Seth City

9 West Ham v Coventry Also playing (not on coupons): Aston Villa v Tottacham.

Nationwide Football League First Division

10 Charlton v Norwich 11 Crewe v Manchester City......X 12 Huddersfield v Middlestrough ...2 13 ipswich v Birmingham .. 14 Nottingham Forest v Swindon1 16 Reading v West Sromwich . 17 Stockport v Port Vale....... 18 Stoke v Sheffield Utd. 19 Sunderland v Bradford City1

20 Tranmere v Bury...... 21 Wolves v Oxford Utd . Second Division

22 Bournemouth v Giffingham... 24 Bristol City v Milwall. 26 Carlisia v Blackocol 28 Plymouth v Fulham ... 30 Walsali v Bristol Rovers

Third Division

32 Wycombe v Watford)

34 Barnet v Peterborough 35 Cambridge Utd v Leyton Orient X 36 Cardiff v Exeter 37 Darlington v Macclesfield 38 Doncaster v Mansfield... 40 Huff v Chester 41 Lincoln v Rotherham.

42 Rochdale v Shrewsbury 43 Sounthorpe v Notts County2 44 Torquey v Swansea. Also playing (not on coupons): Brighton v Colchester

GM Vauxhall Conference 45 Cheltenham v Yeovil 46 Dover v Welling 47 Gateshead v Halitax . 48 Hednesford v Kettering ... 49 Leek v Telford ,....

Four drawts: Liverpool v Leeds Unit-ed, Crewe Alexandra v Manchester City, Lincoln v Rotherham, Gatesheed v Hal-Five aweys: Blackburn, Middlesbrough, Chesterfield, Shrewsbury, Notts Coun-

Ten homes: Arsenal, Cheissa, Man-chester United, West Ham United, Not-tingham Forest, Wolverhampton Wanderers, Bristol City, Torquey Unit-

Leeds v Aston Villa

FA Carling Premiership Coventry v Manchester United... 4 Everton v Bolton...

6 Leicester v Sheffield Wed 8 Wimbledon v West Ham... Nationwide Football League

First Division 9 Birminoham v Tranmere 10 Bradford v Huddersfield . 11 Bury v Crewe ...

13 Middlesbrough v Stockport,.... 14 Oxford v Sundarland...... 15 Port Vale v Wolves ... 16 OPR v Reading 17 Shelfield Utd v Charlton

19 West Bromwich v Stoke . Second Division 20 Blackpool v Wrexham

21 Bristol Rovers v BournemouthX 23 Fulham v Bristol City... 24 Grimsby v Preston... 25 Millwall v Luton . 26 Northampton v Walsa 28 Southend v Wycombe...

30 Wigan v Carisie Third Division 31 Chester v Scunthorpe 33 Levton Orient v Doncaster ... 35 Mansfield v Lincoln 36 Notts County v Hartiepcol ... 37 Peterborough v Brighton ...

39 Scarborough v Danington Saturday 27 December

Bell's Scottish League Premier Division 40 Aberdeen v Motherwell

42 Hibernian v Kilmarhock 43 Rangers v Dundee United First Division

45 Airdnie v St Mirren. 47 Dundee v Falkirk

49 Stirling v Raith Four draws: Leicester v Sheffield Wadnesday, Tottenham v Arsenal, Northampton v Walsall, Aberdeen v Mothervell

Five aways: Manchester United, Sun-derland, Wolverhampton Wanderers, Lincoln, Monton

Ten homes: Blackburn, Leeds, Birm-ingham, Bradford, Sheffield Utd, Swin-don, Peterborough, Hibernian, Rangers, Hamilton,

SPORTING DIGEST

MOTOR RACING

A CONTRACTOR China ready for FI grand prix

One grand prix next year at a is the other track on stand-by. new track in the southern city of Zhuhai, according to reports in Hong Kong. The reports indicate that the

circuit is one of two reserve venues for the 1998 World Championship if either Belgium or Portugal should lose their South China Morning Post.

China could stage a Formula races. Kyalami, in South Africa,

"We are ready to hold a Formula One race and the circuit is up to standard. All the facilities are ready We are very optimistic about our chances, Joe Lim Hun-beng, a director of the Zhuhai Circuit, told the

THE INDEPENDENT **GET MIXING!** WIN A J&B RARE MIX KIT

How do you mk your social life? Perhaps you're imp rock and Opera or football and art galleries? According to a European survey by 188 Rare. Brits are best in Europe as living their social life to the full often mixing timess, shopping and clubbing all in the same day.

3

a aryone understands about mbdng, its jigs Rare - one of Europe's favourite premium spirits. Enjoyed in a long tall glass with plenty of ice and Ginger Ale, its the per-

We have teamed up with J&B Rare to offer 10 readers the chance to win a Rare mbt kit. and 100 runners-up a J&B Rare miniature and can of Ginger Ala. The kit includes a stylish warch, a fleece to wear for outdoor pursuits, a long class, a swizzle stick, a J&B Rare miniature and a can of Ginger Ala to stimulate the

Ginger Ale to stime To enter this competition dial the number below, answer the following question on line and leave your name and full address, and also stating that you are over 18 years old.

Q: What percentage of Britons like to mb: their social life?

Call 0930 525224

Calls cost 50g per minests et all times. Winner picket et random after ines close

Basketbali NBA: Uteh 101 Atlanta 99, Cherlotte 81 Toronto 79, New York 79 Dallas 67, New Jersey 99 Orlando 88, Detroit 96 Philadelphia 82, La Laliers 94 Houston 83, Washington 110 Milwaykes 79, Phoenix 91 Colden State 78, Sacramento 89 Milmelsota 79.

14 .500 WESTERN CONFERENCE L PCT

PCT 5 .808 6 .778 LA Lekers...... -21

jury about two weeks ago when he was punching a heavy bag. O'Neel has missed 17 games because of the ab-Boxing Japan's Satoshi lida knocked down Thailand's Yokthei Sith Oar in the first

right wrist. O'Neal, who has already missed five weeks with a strained ab-dominal muscle, suffered his latest in-

round and went on to take away his World Bosing Association junior ban-tamwelght title by a unanimous decision in Nagoya yesterday

Demmark has applied to host the open-ing stages of the 2002 Tour de France cycle race. Sports Fund Denmark said cycle raca. Sports Fund Denmark said yesterday that it had formally written to the Tour de France organisers of-tering to enter negotiations on stag-ing the opening stages of the classic race in Denmark in the surrimer of 2002. Stages from Copenhagen over the new Great Belt waterway sus-persion bridge and down through the Jutland peninsula to Hamburg, north Germany, where the cyclists could be Germany, where the cyclists could be transported to France are envisaged as possible scenarios. There are over three million cyclists in Denmark.

Football The former Motherwell player, Steve Kirk, has been appointed new manrunk, has been appointed new man-ager of Scottish League Second Di-vision side East Fife. The 34-year-old leaves his post as youth development officer at neighbours Raith to return to the club where he started his play-ing career in 1979. Kirk replaces Jim-my Bone, who left the club earlier this month.

lan Baker-Finch, the former Open winner, was fined yesterday over his decision to disquality himself from a tournament last Thursday. Baker-Finch was playing his first four-round professional tournament since walk-ing out of this year's Open after a dis-astrous operaing round. He failed to complete the ninth hole in the Coolum Classic efter hitting two shots into a water hazard. Although he played the next nine he failed to hand in a com-pleted card. The Australasian PGA four's director of operations, Trevor Herden, would not disclose the details of the fine or any other disciplinary measures. Baker-Finch was also be-leved to have been sanctioned for an tournament last Thursday. Bake leved to have been sanctioned for an obscene gesture at a cameraman. Baker-Finch, who won the Open at Royal Birkdale in 1991, has been in a

deep form stump for almost

Hockey
GREAT BRITAIN PLAYERS TO ATTEND
A WOMEN'S DEVELOPMENT CAMP (In
Bercelona and Terrases between 29-26
January: S Wright and R Welser (Otton Terraquest). L Beavon (Lecester). L Wooding
(Cheirrstord). I Palmer (Colvist). K Walsh
and A Blahop (regittorn). H Richardson
(Sherwood). D Barnes (Portishead) and A
Goldsmith (Peterborough). A Williams
(Penarth). L Williams (risimpstead) & Westmunster). S Thomas and Z Tucker
(Swarsea). S Nuttling and I Thomsissen
(Neurown). M Dattry (Colvyn Bay) and G
Sharples (Loughborough). Students). C
Lampard (Edinburgh). H Walsh, S Judge
and E Rochin (Glasspow Western). K Smith
(Menzeshall). J Wilson (BP). L Carroll and
C Valentime (Bonegrase Grove).

Ice hockey NHL: Detroit 4 Boston 2, Montreal 3 Ed-monton 3 (cit, Ottawa 4 Ny Islanders 1, Tam-pa Bay 2 St Louis 2 (cit, Los Angeles 1 Chcago 0, Anahem 5 Calgary 1 ice skating

irina Suriskaya, the European cham-pion, has claimed the final place on the Russian Olympic figure skating team. Suriskaya. 19, was given a sec-ond chance after a poor showing at the Russian national championships. She placed only fourth, finishing be-hind Yelena Sokolova. But Russian of-ficials decided to make a final selection after the Championship Series finals after the Championship Series finals last weekend, Stutskaya again finished fourth in Munich but skated welt in the free programme to beet Sokolova, who was fifth, for the last Olympic berth.

Rugby League Shaun Irwin, the former Great Britain centre, has been appointed Feather-stone captain after signing a new ons-year contract with the First Division club.

Oldham have peid an undisclosed fee to neighbours Rochdale to sign their former captain Neil Flanagan, 27, a scrum-half who also played for Hud-Long-serving players David Mycce and Alex Thompson have left Sheffield af-ter tailing to agree terms with the club. Mycce joined the Engles in 1989 and played 188 times for the club, but turther appearances were limited by pe-riods of serious injury. The former Great Britain Under 21 capitain Thompson

made 47 appearances for the club be-tween spells with Newcastle Knights

The number of mobile phones and pagers that spectators at the forthcoming Winter Olympic Games in Nagano will be allowed to carry (to prevent distractions in events such as figure skating). Also on a list of 19 banned items are weapons and animals.

The cash registers will be jangling merrily for a **Boxing Day programme** with a localised flavour. The folly and the rivalry are all very well, but as Phil Shaw reports, the sideshow of a returning hero could well overshadow the main attractions at the Premiership summit.

Jürgen Klinsmann will be able to exert a Christmas presence for Tottenham Hotspur after all. Alan Sugar, the Spurs chairman. yesterday received international clearance from the Italian FA for his budget-priced signing from Sampdoria, leaving the German captain free to make his second debut for the club at Aston Villa on Boxing Day.

Whether or not Klinsmann plays against Villa depends on whether Spurs' head coach, Christian Gross, considers he is match-fit. Gross may also be reluctant to change the side who beat Barnsley last weekend, while the master striker himself hinted that he might delay his comeback until Sunday's north London derby, saying: "I've never lost to Arsenal, so it will be good to play in that

Klinsmann does not have happy memories of Villa Park. Three years ago next month, he was knocked out by a reckless challenge by the home goalkeeper, Mark Bosnich. The incident occurred within an hour of Eric Cantona's violent clash with a spectator at Crystal Palace, making it an evening that should perhaps be immortalised as Kick-Boxing Day.

The temptation to plunge Klinsmann into the fray could be increased by the news that Villa could be without flu victims Gareth Southgate and Steve Staunton. Brian Little, the Villa manager, who has also been suffering from the virus, said: "It's a great move for Spurs. His arrival will really boost them, which we'll have to watch."

Liverpool, having led Manchester United by five points at the same stage last Christmas. go into their home match with Leeds 12 points adrift of the Old Trafford club.

Recent form – apart from aberrations at home to Barnsley and United - offers some en- an improvement of eight places couragement to Roy Evans. Liverpool have won the other six of the last eight matches. And since Tony Yeboah's wondrous winner of two and a half years ago, they have emerged victorious five times and drawn

games with Leeds by a margin of 16-0. Leeds, however, are un-

beaten in seven, and the Scrooge-like tendencies for which George Graham's teams are renowned have delivered three consecutive clean sheets. The way they respond to the menace of Messrs McMana-

a strong indication as to whether the spiteful display at Chelsea was a one-off or a taste of things to come.

More than anyone with the possible exception of Liverpool, Barnsley desperately need a point-laden Christmas. They have failed to build on their success at Anfield, prising a solitary were still there come May.

one of the six League and Cup man, Owen and Fowler will give point out of 12 and remaining rooted to the bottom.

Danny Wilson's team face a self-out match at 17th-placed Bolton knowing that further defensive generosity could leave them trailing their opponents by nine points. History offers them little hope: Nottingham Forest. in last place 12 months back,

than a trip to the champions. After the victory at Leicester, to astute management, by Howard Kendall rejoiced in three clean sheets in a row. But as Roy Hodgson. Rovers have festive habit of dropping in on Everton need more than mere reacted positively to their maul-

computer could scarcely have

come up with a more unkind cut

their first away win in a year, the duly.

"caretaker" Tony Parkes as well

For Everton, fresh from unlikely to trouble United un-

egation zone last December to to the feebleness that cost second place today is a tribute David Pleat his job.

Blackburn's rise from the rel-

the neighbours and making off draws, and with two goals from ing in Manchester and will be with the points. All in all, resix games, both penalties, look confident of winning at membering the altercation be-

Sheffield Wednesday. After a

bright start under Ron Atkin-

son, Wednesday have reverted

Third-placed Chelsea re-

ceive Wimbledon, who make a

keeper, Jim Leighton, and the new recruit, Derek Whyte.

яисе Арги. he would listen to offers for any of his squad except his goal-

tween Ruud Gullit and Vinnie Jones a couple of Christmases back, it is not the return to Stamford Bridge Chelsea might have wanted after the battle with Leeds, especially in view of their vulnerability against attackers who hustle and play at

Meanwhile, can Boxing Day's traditional knack of producing shock results trick Crystal Palace into winning before their own supporters? Apart from an "away" fixture with Wimbledon, they have not taken three points at Selhurst Park

The arrival of Southampton, albeit an improving force now that David Hirst and Carlton Palmer have taken someof the strain off Matt Le Tissier/offers the best opportunity so far for a chorus of that seasonal favourite: "Oh what fun it is to



Christian Gross, Tottenham's Swiss coach, presides over pre-Chistmas training yesterday in the knowledge that Jürgen Klinsmann is available to play on Boxing Day

Photograph: Peter lay

England move into top four in the world but Fifa downgrades other British sides

governing body, Fifa, yesterday.

on 12 months ago. They finished top of their World Cup qualifying group and ahead of Italy, who have also fallen behind England in the new rankings but moved up one place to ninth. Scotland, despite qual-

ings issued by football's world this time last year, while their group opponents next summer, Brazil, are still ranked as the best in the world. Germany are second and the Czech Republic two places higher in third.

The Republic of Ireland have gone down to 47th from 36th; Northern Ireland have slumped from 64th to 93rd and

England have jumped to fourth if ying for France 98, have fallen Wales are 102nd after being to convince Mickaël Madar to agreed a three-year contract to der pressure after the managin the end-of-year world rank- from 29th to 37th compared to 80th last Christmas. Terry Ven- join them from Deportivo La take over from Ray Harford. er of the Scottish Premier's ables' Australia have moved up 15 places to 35th.

> Coventry City have signed Viorel Moldovan, on a four and a half year contract worth £4.2m. The Romanian international striker is due to join from the Swiss side Grasshopper on 2 January.

However, Everton have failed

Coruna. The 29-year-old French international striker had been expected to sign for the Goodison club vesterday, but he will fly back to Spain today to think further about the move.

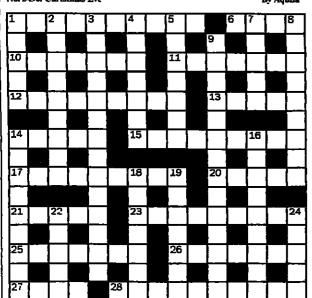
West Bromwich Albion will parade Denis Smith as their new manager at a press conference at The Hawthorns today. He has

Crystal Palace have ma bid for Norwich's Welsh Under-

21 midfielder Craig Bellamy. Preston have dismissed reports that Ian Rush may replace Gary Peters as manager at Deepdale. The Newcastle striker said last week that this would be his last season in the top flight. Aberdeen's players are un-

see Palace win at home.

THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD



ACROSS Birth and death of a

backbiter? (10) Code name for fine linen 10 Intended building cafe in

east (7) 11 Running off irregularly with sweetheart (7) 12 Still lesions, unfortunately, round edges of ears

13 Dad's army food (5)

14 True sound (5) Sight of glasses not quite full (9)

17 Boss breadman makes me a pastry (9) 20 Couples in sandy courses 4

21 Grainless tropic isle? (5) 5

25 Burden of having to iron 8 after work (7)

bishop? (7) 27 This playwright has influenced women (4) 28 Ladies' magazine (6-4)

1 Small, sprightly German eleven at home (5) Drink one at a time, as when winding up (9) American intern turns

> This hero uses the maze Supervise poetry in Old

out to be an old hand

French mate on board is Barred sections of Oregon, as a resettlement? (2-2,5)

26 Long-time-no-see sort of One bearing inwards. say? (8,6) 14 Returning standard bill with notes of debts is

predatory (9)
16 Voice of guerrilla, lot changed? (9) 18 State of Mexico that is extremely hot (7) 19 Positioned anew – as was Reading, reportedly (2-5) 22 Browning's successful ex-

aminee? (5) American cannon that uses three balls (5)

Holyfield vetoes Lewis fight because \$25m is not enough

Evander Holyfield has pulled out of his proposed undisputed world heavyweight title fight against Britain's Lennox Lewis because he is unhappy with the

Don King, Holyfield's promoter, had reached a provisional agreement with representatives of Lewis, but the fight has been called off following a meeting between Jim Thomas, a lawyer representing the American fighter, and Seth Abraham and Lou Dibella, of the cable television company Home Box Office.

Thomas said: "We could not come to an agreement and nothing is scheduled. HBO were unwilling to provide sufficient guarantees to assure the fighters of appropriate purses.

"The deal on offer wouldn't have allowed Holyfield to make as much as he did for the recent contest against Michael Moorer. I tried as hard as I could to make this fight, but it was simply not possible."

The provisional agreement would have provided for purses of \$25m (£15.4m) for Holyfield and \$12m for Lewis.

However, King's cut would have come out of Holyfield's purse. Holyfield, the World Boxing Association and International Boxing Federation champion, may now defend the WBA title against Britain's Henry Ak-

inwande or some of the younger

heavyweight contenders. Lewis, meanwhile, may now turn to a defence of his World Boxing Council title against either Shannon Briggs or the former undisputed world champion, James "Buster" Douglas. tho is making a comeback.

Ken Jones

CRICKET

Selection panel backed beyond millennium

England vesterday consolidated their approach to attempting to improve their international prospects by extending the contracts of their selection panel to the millennium.

The chairman, David Gravency, and selectors Graham Gooch and Mike Gatting, whose agreements with the England and Wales Cricket Board were all due to end prior to the 1999 World Cup but have now been installed beyond that after a unanimous vote of confidence by England's Management Advisory Com-

mittee at Lord's vesterday. It is a further indication of the ECB's policy to maintain continuity both within the in-

ternational team and among the back-up personnel prior to the

1999 World Cup in England. Separate squads for Tests and one-day internationals have selectors for their efforts," said already been identified with Adam Hollioake underlining the wisdom of the policy by leading England to a spectacular Champions' Trophy success in Sharjah last weekend,

The coach. David Lloyd. initially appointed at the start of the 1996 season, has also had his contract extended beyond the World Cup. Physiotherapist Wavne Morton and fitness consultant Dean Riddle complete England's back-room staff. We are delighted with the

progress we are making at international level, so it is quite right that we should recognise that progress by rewarding the Tim Lamb, the ECB's chief executive.

Graveney and Gooch, whose current contracts were due to end in February 1999, have been reappointed for a further six months.

Gooch is due to depart as manager of the A team touring Kenya and Sri Lanka on December 29. Gatting, whose contract ran to February of next year, has been reappointed for a further two years and will

coach the A team on the tour. CPublished by Newspaper Publishing PLC. I Canado Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 SDL, and printed at Mirror Colour Print, St. Back rouge available from Historic Newspapers, filtres started

Happy Christmas Bora



Bora, abandoned in the snow at 9 months, now has a new loving home this Christmas.

As featured on the BBC News (Sunday) and the front page of this newspaper yesterday.

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more children before next Christmas. They desperately need your help

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